ASSUMPTIONS UNDERLYING FRENCH SECONDARY EDUCATION

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A INTRODUCTION

1 PREFACE

a Purpose of the inquiry: The rapid changes which have been taking place in secondary education during the last fifteen years have led to a re-examination of the bases of post-primary education in all the major countries of the world. This has been true of France as much as of most Western nations, but the structure of secondary education in France is such that reform is not easy. Reform moves have been numerous and some part of them has been incorporated in the secondary education system. Yet the forces underlying and controlling the present organisation, though frequently questioned, have on the whole not changed greatly.

This study is an attempt to discover the basic assumptions of French secondary education, to see to what extent they are at present being challenged, and to examine them in the light of the urgent needs of a nation sure to develop rapidly both technically and intellectually in this second half of the twentieth century.

b Educational establishments visited: I have fortunately been able to visit a considerable number of schools and other educational institutions in France and to discuss with administrators and teachers the many problems which are facing French secondary education at present.

I am particularly indebted to the staff of the Centre International d'Etudes Pédagogiques at Sèvres, near Paris, for their hospitality, guidance and practical assistance during each of two lengthy visits. The kindness particularly of Madame Hatinguais, Directress of the Centre, and of Monsieur Quignard, secretary-general, is most gratefully acknowledged. The help of the staff of the Institut Pédagogique National, without which the almost incredible resources of their education library would not have been explored, was also invaluable. The co-operation and friendly criticism of the Headmaster and staff of the Lycée Périer at Marseilles are also remembered with gratitude.

These three establishments provided the opportunity for extensive discussion, and for visits to classes and activities of both experimental and traditional kinds. School visits which added considerably to my understanding of French secondary education included also those to:

Lycée Marseilleveyre, Marseilles

Lycée Toulouse-Bellevue, Toulouse

Collège Moderne de Garçons, Bordeaux

Lycée Janson-de-Sailly, Paris

Lycée La Fontaine, Paris

Lycée Claude Bernard, Paris

Cours Complémentaire, Sèvres

Section Technique, Lycée de Sèvres

Lycée d'Enghien

Centre Audio-Visuel, St. Cloud

Ecole Normale Technique, Saclay

c Published sources in France: State-controlled, highly centralised and conservative in many ways, French secondary education is well documented. The state-run Institut Pédagogique National publishes regular and detailed commentaries on current practices in addition to texts of all laws, decrees and instructions regarding education. The "Cahiers Pédagogiques" are particularly valuable in reviewing special fields. The "Bulletin Officiel de l'Education Nationale" and its unofficial supplement "L'Education Nationale" are basic sources of information on official policy and on approved practice. The teacher unions and various groups of specialist teachers (and notably, for secondary education, the Société des Agrégés) also publish regular and copious bulletins and magazines.

There is therefore no lack of periodic literature, and the French secondary-school teacher can fairly claim to be as well informed as his counterpart anywhere in the world.

There is, however, a lack of authoritative studies of the education of adolescents in France. A good deal of the experiment and reform which has been so freely discussed in France in the last decade is recorded only in the periodicals mentioned. Apart from several historical studies (notably by Roger Gal and Michel Glatigny) and some critical analyses of particular problems, little has been published since 1946. The philosophical bases of secondary education, in particular, have been neglected by French educational writers.

I believe that in the present period of relatively rapid

change in educational thinking in France, this lack of critical works - and indeed of an objective survey of the whole field as it stands at present - is a serious one. Despite the masses of material available in the pedagogical library of the I.P.N., I was distressed to discover there the paucity of reliable philosophical and historical studies, and amazed by the number of partisan, axe-grinding, ill-documented works.

Outside France, apart from studies of the reform movements by a number of scholars (Donald Miles in America, Vernon Mallinson in England among others) little appears to have been published in recent years.

d Rapid changes at present in French education: It is certain that France is on the threshold of an era of relatively rapid reform of its secondary education system. For fifteen years, and more, reform schemes have been propounded and stoutly defended, but only partially put into application. The last three years have seen some modification of the final examination and of the system of selection and orientation in the first year of secondary schooling as well as of the relationship between the state and the private schools. This movement is, I believe, certain to become more rapid, and gradually the whole basis of the structure which has so painfully been built up during one hundred and fifty years will become open to question.

e Dangers of comparative studies: The present study has its genesis in the work completed by Professor Freeman Butts of Teachers College, Columbia University, on the assumptions underlying Australian education. I am naturally much indebted

to this pioneering work for the basis of my own analysis. And I have endeavoured to heed his warning that any visitor to a foreign country is "bound to see things with an outlook conditioned by his own culture".[1]

This thesis does not attempt to make comparisons with educational theories and practice in Australia, but the criticisms made of the French educational scene are inevitably coloured by my own preconceived ideas on educational matters. I believe that if one is conscious of this inevitable limitation, and has carefully considered what these preconceived ideas may be, the resultant critical analysis will not be unduly one-sided or invalid.

Rather than organise the thesis around the broad subdivisions of education - administration, curriculum and method - I have tried to disentangle the background assumptions which seem to me to be operative in all these fields. This method leads sometimes to an arbitrary division of comment on related aspects of a problem, but I feel that the resulting clarity of development compensates for this shortcoming.

2 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

> "The temperament of a people is characterised by the education it gives its children - and each nation is the child of the education it receives."[2]

a Secondary education before 1808: Until the French Revolution and the advent of Napoleon, the concept of state

education was virtually non-existent in France. It is true that the eighteenth century saw the birth of the idea in the writings of the educational philosophers. Miles says of the period: "A new faith in education was generated as a prime factor in human progress. Born of this new faith were both the concept of education as a government concern and the principle of centralisation of education."[3] But the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had seen the establishment of the great Church schools - the Jesuit "Collège de Clermont" in 1563, and innumerable others, Jesuit, Oratorian, Sulpician and Eudist, in Paris and in the provinces. The influence of these schools remained great despite the attempted suppression of the teaching congregations during the French Revolution. (The decree of 17 August 1792, which qualified the proposed national education as "universal, free and neutral"[4], was to inspire the legislators of the Third Republic in the latter half of the nineteenth century).[5]

b Establishment of lycées: The one hundred and nine articles of the Napoleonic decree of 17 March 1808 established state "secondary" education in France in a form which it has retained ever since. By this law there was created "a national, centralised system, a teaching body supervised by the state, partly committed to celibacy, controlled by inspectors serving as the link between local and central authorities, and directed by a University Council having at its head a professor. The division (of the country) into académies under the direction of a rector dates from the same time. A discipline comparable to that of an army barracks was imposed on teachers and pupils

alike. From that time, a uniform system, imitated also by the private schools, submitted the whole teaching service to regulation."[6]

The lycée, as conceived by Napoleon, and as it remains to a remarkable extent today, was a semi-monastic institution devoted to disinterested, academic study. Pupils lived under a military régime - even in 1936 Vial could still say: "The internal organisation of the lycée and its discipline are based on military order"[7] - and the teaching hierarchy was a reproduction of army grades. At the same time, article 38 provided that: "All the schools of the Université Impériale will take as the basis of their teaching: firstly, the precepts of the Catholic religion;..." and in many ways Napoleon's organisation was based on the regulations of the Jesuit schools.[8]

c Development of the secondary curriculum: The curriculum in the newly established lycées covered seven years, with the emphasis heavily placed on the classics and the sciences, and French and history excluded.[9] The final two years were devoted largely to rhetoric and philosophy, the latter being taught and examined in Latin. During the nineteenth century the curriculum underwent frequent change as the ideals of education altered. For example, in 1828-9 modern foreign languages appeared, while in 1833 the sciences were for the first time included from the first year.

d The lycée-collège dualism: It was in 1852 that the first move was made to provide separate options for science

and humanities students. But Foutoul, the Minister of Education at the time, opposed this development[10], and it was not until 1865-6 that the idea reappeared, this time as a classical-modern dualism, which led in the 1890's to the establishment of the collège moderne and the equating of the classical and the modern baccalauréat.

e The reforms of 1902: The Law of 1902 placed these changes in their right perspective by providing a single basic secondary course, the options of which had equal status and led equally to the baccalauréat examination. There were two cycles, of four and three years respectively; the options available were between Latin/Greek, Latin/modern languages, Latin/science and science/modern languages. The reform recognised the increasing importance of science, and provided also for more effective teaching of modern languages (the use of the "direct method" in France dates from this year).

f The growth of education for girls: The year 1910 had seen the first official provision of secondary education for girls. In that year the Camille Sée decree provided a special course with a literary bias and led to the establishment of girls' lycées. In 1925, after an abortive attempt by Bérard to make Latin and Greek compulsory for all secondary pupils, the Albert reform provided for identical courses for girls and boys and set the "modern" option and hence the collèges modernes on a firm basis.

g Free and compulsory secondary education: It was not until the period 1930-33 that secondary education (in the

limited sense in which that term is still largely understood in France[11]) was provided free by the state. Until then, secondary education had of course largely been the prerogative of the children of the wealthy. Since the Second World War there has been a marked extension of the upper primary classes in the cours complémentaires (the increase from 1949 to 1958, for example, was of the order of 82%[12]) so that a shortened secondary course is available to more pupils, but secondary education is not compulsory at present in France, and until the reforms concerning the leaving age come into effect in 1967[13] many young people in France will leave school at the end of their thirteenth year holding only a primary school certificate.

h The immediate future: Since 1945, the structure of secondary education has undergone gradual modification. The experiments with the classes nouvelles[14] have undoubtedly been an important contribution to a new and progressive outlook among numerous teachers and administrators. Current reforms, which provide for the school leaving age to rise to sixteen in 1967, must cause further modification of the structure and methods of secondary education. This challenge to provide effectively for pupils, mature physically but not gifted academically, does not seem to have provoked much thought or discussion so far in France. But as the budget provision for secondary education rises (in the last six years the budget provision for education has been:

1955	11.0%	1956	9.6%
1957	10.3%	1958	10.1%
1959	11.6%	1960	12.4%

and the percentage of this devoted to secondary education has risen from sixteen in 1956 to seventeen in 1960[15]), there is every prospect that a form of education will be established which, if it is able to combine the best features of the French tradition with the best aspects of the post-war reform movements, will be a model for most other civilised nations.

3 DEFINITIONS OF "SECONDARY"

a The age definition adopted here: For the purpose of this thesis I have adopted the ordinary Australian concept of secondary education, as that provided for the development of pupils between the ages of about eleven and eighteen. This, however, is a much wider concept of secondary education than what is usually meant by the French.

b The French concept of "secondaire": For the French, "primary" education and "secondary" education (in this sense, always in inverted commas in this thesis) have been separate and parallel methods of instruction. Particularly in the period up to 1940, many of the lycées provided courses from the first year of schooling, and this is still true of some. The type and method of education provided in the lycées (and more recently also in the collèges) was felt to be suitable only for an élite. The écoles primaires (with more recently their cours complémentaires) provided education for the mass of pupils who would not remain at school much if at all beyond the age of fourteen. As the cours complémentaires already provide a course similar to the first four years of the "secondary" schools,

the distinction is already unreal, and will become increasingly so as the current reforms take full effect.

At present, the distinction is nevertheless a very real one in the minds of most French people and of many teachers. In 1956, G. Sauvage expressed fears lest "more contacts between the teachers in the various sections of the education service prevent our education from remaining the victory of the vigorous separation of the real 'citadels of learning' from the rest, as at present in the various directorates-general[16]."[17] It is this artificial separation of primary from secondary education, so much applauded by M. Sauvage, which has made the effective growth of post-primary education in France so difficult. More contacts rather than less are very badly needed between the two.

c Variation in teaching methods and its effects: The essential difference between these two sections of the educational structure lies in the methods employed by the teachers in them, and this in turn results from the radically different methods of teacher training for the two. Whereas the primary teacher is trained in the "normal schools", following a programme based closely on the primary syllabus and being prepared specifically in the pedagogical skills he will later use, the secondary teacher's preparation may involve virtually no pedagogical training although the academic standard in university studies is frequently very high indeed.[18] The education received by a pupil in the "secondary" school is therefore more closely akin in method to university education

than anything to which we are accustomed at this level in Australia. And as more and more pupils enter the secondary schools, the unsuitability of such methods becomes more and more painfully obvious.

d Teacher status in "primary" and "secondary" schools: The long-standing respect of the French for cultural achievement is reflected in their attitude to the "secondary" teacher. The high status which he enjoys is often in marked contrast to his effectiveness as a teacher. On the other hand, the merits of the primary teacher seem rarely appreciated. F.W. Roman writes that "the Frenchman himself has not yet learned to appreciate truly his own primary schools. He receives with something of a shock the news that the future greatness of France lies much more in the philosophy and spirit with which these institutions are founded than on the traditions and ideals that prevail in the 'secondary' and higher institutions."[19]

e Extension of secondary schooling to all: The stage has now been reached in French education where the old concept of "secondary" as education provided only for an élite must disappear. As the current reform moves take effect, and particularly as the period of "orientation" is instituted in all seventh-year classes except those preparing for the certificat d'études primaires, the inconveniences of the present system will become intolerable. Already Jean Papillon can write in the "Figaro": "How can we demand teachers, trained by different methods and subject to directors working at best

in parallel, that they collaborate, if the directors do not themselves set the example? In addition to their being out of date, the accumulated effects of contradictory structures will one day make a transformation necessary. The various directors cannot indefinitely pursue their 'insular' lives."[20] And Guy Caplot in "L'Administration de l'enseignement national et la réforme administrative", published in 1960, opposes the "vertical" structure of French educational administration and urges the adoption of a horizontal structure similar to that in England.[21] The aim must inevitably be to limit primary education to the first six or seven years of schools, and to integrate all the various aspects of education after this while still maintaining the flexibility of structure already obtained in the present organisations at that level.

4 AIMS OF FRENCH SECONDARY EDUCATION

a Historical background: The Napoleonic ideals in "secondary" education seem to have remained largely unchallenged and unaltered into the present decade. And the contrast between the aims of "secondary" and of "primary" education remains today almost as sharp as ever. Briefly, these aims emphasised discipline and orderliness, logical reasoning based on humanism, and disinterested, critical thinking. The intention was clearly to train an élite to rule.[22] These aims were obviously different from those of primary education, which provides the basic training for those not destined to be leaders.

b Disciplinary aims: The claim that education should

provide training in mental discipline is often the first made by teachers and administrators in France, and the organisation of study in both "primary" and "secondary" schools is such as to stress this aspect. The barracks-like schools and the military background of the Napoleonic system have no doubt given physical support to this view. The general approach to all the subject areas of the "secondary" curriculum in lycées and collèges certainly is such, I think, as to place the primary stress on mental discipline.[23]

c Disinterested, academic study: This is the aspect of French education which strikes the commentator most forcibly perhaps, and comment upon it is inevitable in all the literature on the subject. Descartes, the seventeenth-century philosopher, before the Age of Reason, was already claiming that it was "reason" which made man susceptible to education and that it was this same "reason" which was the basic instrument in the educative process.[24] Three centuries later, education minister Léon Bérard in 1921 wrote: "Secondary education should, by the slow action of prolonged and disinterested studies, form young people who, whatever speciality they take up later, will be distinguished by a heightened power to interest themselves in and apply themselves to the various creations of the spirit as well as of the industry of man."[25] The training of the intelligence is undoubtedly for the French teacher his primordial task; he would almost certainly say that he was teaching the art of thinking: "Without proclaiming it openly," said Albert Millot, "without always having a clear consciousness of their

attitude, teachers have very often concentrated all their efforts on the acquisition of knowledge and the exercise of the intelligence. Their behaviour presupposes the assumption that the great task is to teach pupils to think."[26] Mr Vernon Mallinson, lecturing at London University on "Tradition and Change in Secondary Education", could say of French education: "Because activity of mind is valued for its own sake, critical thinking is encouraged at all stages. Even today, philosophy, mathematics, Latin and Greek are offered in most curricula as a training in how to think, not what to think."[27] Discussion with individual teachers in schools in France certainly confirms his view: "I rather fear," said a teacher of English in Marseilles, "that our teaching is bookish rather than practical. But general culture is much more than a tradition. It is the essential aim of any valid education, because it is through it that the mind is trained and opened." And her colleague added: "It is the basis (and the end, I mean the goal) of our educational endeavour."

d Ethical and moral aims: One is tempted at first to say that moral aims are conspicuously lacking in secondary education in France. Miss Olive Wykes, of Melbourne University, speaks of the "tendency of the French towards irresponsible individualism,"[28] and I can only confirm her general impressions of behaviour patterns among the French as a people. Sporadic attempts have been made to teach civics and ethics consciously,[29] generally with little success, for the concept of the teacher - or more grandly, of education - as responsible for the moral

development of the child lies almost entirely outside the French approach. The traditionally strong family ties and the relatively greater strength of parental control in France no doubt accounts partly for the reluctance of the schools to include moral growth among its basic aims.

e Minor importance of social aims: The formation of character and the development of the social side of the individual personality is an essential and conscious aim of the schools of Anglo-Saxon countries. Almost the opposite seems to be the case in many French schools. Albert Ehm, discussing problems of education and culture, pertinently remarked that "the aim of education seems to be not the formation of personality but rather the 'neutralisation' of the child so that he will be a 'good pupil', polite, knowledgeable and cultivated, who seems to be listening to the teacher and who, in contrast to his fellows, does not hide in his desk marbles, picture post-cards or white mice in a cardboard box..."[30] It was Marshal Pétain, during a crisis in French history, who claimed that the greatest error in French education was that it was "a school of individualism."[31] The French educator certainly will lay far less stress on preparing his pupils for a co-operative, social existence than on the need for academic study: he forgets too often, says Albert Millot, that "the majority of men are not destined to the life of the critic or the philosopher, and that today more than ever life demands that the individual be able not only to understand but also to will and to act."[32]

f Physical education: While social studies and co-operative activities seem to be making little headway in French secondary education, the same is not true of physical education. The schools' rôle here is being increasingly stressed and the physical welfare of the adolescent is more and more being required of the schools. The inclusion of a compulsory test in physical education in the baccalauréat examination[33] is but one manifestation of this movement.

g The public's rôle in education: It might seem therefore that the aims which the leaders of French educational thought - and the classroom teachers too - put before them are relatively limited. It is, I believe, certainly true that the public's conception of the aims of secondary education is more limited in France than here. "Our aim," says dogmatically the critic Deska (from whose wonderfully alive analysis of the shortcomings of education in France I shall have occasion to quote frequently), "is to form the professional classes of tomorrow."[34] And there for most French parents is the end of the matter. The great need to awaken the public to the problems of education is only half realised as yet; the limited concept of the public's rôle in public education remains one of the main reasons for the difficulty in bringing about effective reform.

5 CHALLENGING THE ASSUMPTIONS

a The need for reform: "There is no doubt that the French educational system has been surpassed, in many respects, by those of many other nations."[35] Pedagogues in France have long

realised the need for reform if French secondary education is to keep pace with modern life. And reform projects have certainly not been lacking. The putting into full effect of these reforms has unfortunately often been tardy and half-hearted: "France has remained almost entirely aloof from the new movements which appear to be transforming educational doctrine elsewhere in Europe and in the U.S.A.," wrote Albert Rivaud in 1942.[36] Whereas the English parliament was able at the end of World War II to pass and put rapidly into effect the 1944 Education Act, France had to be content with a long series of projects. However there are now reassuring signs of a fresh desire to put these long-awaited reforms into effect.

b Jean Zay and Langevin: Jean Zay was Minister of Education before the Second World War. In March 1937, he placed before the French parliament a project for reform based largely on the proposals of the group of educationists styled "Les Compagnons de l'Université Nouvelle".[37] The war prevented implementation of the proposals. The Langevin Commission, set up in November 1944, was the first post-war group to make proposals, including compulsory schooling for all pupils to the age of eighteen years. Perhaps partly because of the Communist leanings of Langevin, little came of the proposals.

c "Classes nouvelles" and "lycées pilotes": One of the most influential experiments in the years since 1944 has been that of the classes nouvelles. The hope that the organisation and methods of these classes[38] will be applied throughout France's secondary schools has been persistently expressed; in

1952, Director of Education Charles Brunold devoted a lengthy circular to the subject: "The results of this effort, carried out with an active faith, perseverance and method worthy of our hommage, as well as the international fame it has achieved, put us under the obligation now to apply the results throughout our schools, enlarging an experiment until now limited to the classes nouvelles to embrace all our 'secondary' education."[39] But in fact, until recently, the classes nouvelles experiment (and its application in certain schools and classes, called lycées (or classes) pilotes) had made only limited headway in the face of the traditional conservatism of many secondary teachers.

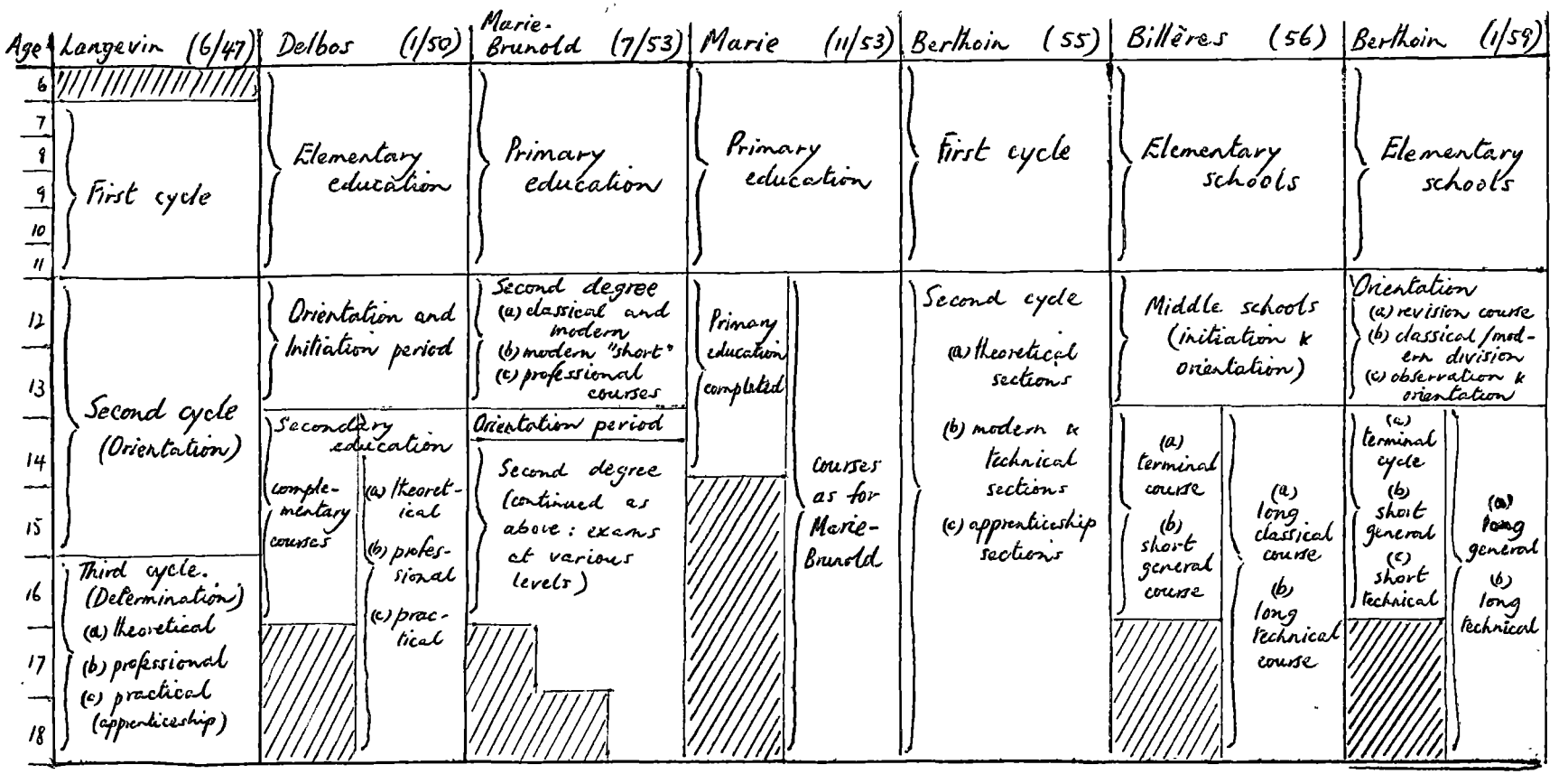
d Proposed reforms of secondary education: I set out on the following page in tabular form the main features of the half-dozen principal reform bills placed before the French parliament in the last fifteen years.

From these schemes the following common features are noteworthy:

i the desire to raise the school leaving age, at first to eighteen, and then, as this became less and less a realistic goal, to sixteen;

ii the need to institute a period of observation and orientation rather than to rely on an examination to provide entry to various types of school at the end of the primary education period;

iii the increasing attention to practical and technical education in the post-primary period.



POST-WAR REFORM PROPOSALS

Each of these factors is soundly based educationally. The implementation of each is however a major problem for France, largely because of the force of the basic assumptions which are to be studied in the main sections of this thesis.

e Reform of the baccalauréat: The baccalauréat is the examination which sanctions the seven-year course of study of the lycées and collèges. Taken in two sections, a year apart, it has changed little in its form for well over a hundred years. The last two years have seen tentative efforts to reform this institution, accompanied by loud outbursts by public opinion in the press and elsewhere.[40] As the other reform moves gain momentum - and already it is clear that this is occurring - the reform of the baccalauréat to adapt it to a larger number of candidates and perhaps to a wider variety of courses becomes inevitable.

f Aid for the private schools: As will be seen[41], the question of the relationship between church and state has been one of the chief causes of strife in the field of education in France. After a period of relative quiet, the storms of the early 1900's and of several periods between the wars have recently been experienced again as the de Gaulle administration has shown itself disposed to increase government aid to the private schools (which are almost entirely Roman Catholic-controlled). The problem is one which is familiar in many countries, and it seems unlikely that the present moves will provide any sort of satisfactory solution.

g Prolongation of compulsory schooling: The various reform

proposals mentioned above have had in common the intention of raising the school leaving age, at present fourteen and among the lowest in Europe. The law now provides that the age of compulsory attendance shall be raised to sixteen in 1967 (that is, it will affect pupils who began compulsory schooling in September 1959). Much greater provision will need to be made than at present for pupils who are not talented academically and who will leave school as soon as permitted. "This terminal schooling," says André Gall, writing in "L'Education Nationale", the semi-official journal published concurrently with the departmental "Bulletin Officiel", "will in fact be very concrete, and very diverse in accord with the future activity of the pupils. With an agricultural bias in the country, a commercial or industrial bias in the cities, it will offer young people both a wider general education and a polyvalent, concrete, pre-vocational preparation..."[42] Certainly one of the great tasks of French secondary education in the years immediately ahead is going to be to plan effectively for courses of this type.

h Teacher training reforms: One of the unresolved problems still facing secondary education in France is the effective preparation of teachers for the new types of education being proposed so insistently now in these reform measures. The institution of the C.A.P.E.S. (Certificat d'Aptitude du Professorat à l'Enseignement Secondaire)[43] has been a first move in the right direction, but the idea that a secondary teacher needs a professional training in pedagogy is certainly

not yet accepted in France, and will in fact meet strong opposition from a majority not only of the taxpayers but also of the teachers themselves.

The last two years have been more encouraging for reform in education in France than the previous two decades - one is tempted to say for a much longer period than that - and it is certain that some of the long-cherished traditions of French "secondary" education, the assumptions so deeply rooted as to seem virtually immutable, will begin to be challenged. To see what these assumptions are, how they are changing and how they must change in the light of a rapidly developing world, is our task in the succeeding sections of this thesis.

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1 Butts, R.F., Assumptions Underlying Australian Education, (Melbourne, A.C.E.R., 1955), p. 2.

2 Hubert, R., Histoire de la Pédagogie, (Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1949), p. 166.

3 Miles, D.W., Recent Reforms in French Secondary Education, (New York, Teachers' College, Columbia University, 1953), p. 14.

4 Palméro, Histoire des Institutions et des Doctrines Pédagogiques par les Textes, (Paris, S.U.D.E.L., 1951), p. 250.

5 Devèze, R., Précis Devèze, (5th ed., Paris, Institut Pédagogique National, 1958), Vol. I, p. 73. See also

sections C2a and b.

6 Gal, R., Histoire de l'Education, (Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1948), pp. 110-111.

7 Vial, F., Trois Siècles d'Histoire de l'Enseignement Secondaire, (Paris, Delagrave, 1936), p. 178.

8 Palméro, op. cit., p. 287.

9 Foureroy at the time wrote: "There is no need to teach what each can learn for himself... history properly speaking needs only to be read to be appreciated." Vial, op. cit., p. 172.

10 The teaching of the Université had as its aim to develop, not the special aptitude of the individual, but the general faculties of the mind. (Foutoul's Report to the Emperor, quoted by Vial, op. cit., p. 213).

11 see section A3b.

12 Informations Statistiques, (Paris, Institut Pédagogique National), Feb. 1959, p. 115.

13 see section A5g.

14 see sections A5c and F4.

15 information supplied by the Budget Bureau of the Department of Public Instruction, Paris.

16 Primary, Secondary and Technical education are controlled independently by three Directions Générales.

17 Sauvage, G., "Réforme de l'enseignement - dix ans de projets", Educateurs, No. 56, March/April 1956, p. 117.

18 cf section G.

19 Roman, F.W., The New Education in Europe, (London, Routledge,

1930), p. 177.

20 Papillon, J., "La Classe de Sixième", Le Figaro, 24 May 1960.

21 mentioned by Papillon in the same article.

22 cf remarks on 'Tradition and Change in Secondary Education' by Mr V. Mallinson, as quoted in "French Line", Times Educational Supplement, 12 February 1960.

23 This is perhaps specially marked in the teaching of French language and literature. Cf section D2a.

24 Cf Ehm, A., Education et Culture - Problèmes Actuels, (Paris, Presses Universitaires de France , 1942), p. 28.

25 Meyer, A.E., Development of Education in the Twentieth Century, (New York, Prentice-Hall, 1949), p. 214. The extract is from a decree submitted by Bérart to the President of the Republic.

26 Millot, A., Les Grandes Tendances de la Pédagogie Contemporaine, (Paris, Felix Alcan, 1938), p. 138.

27 reported in "French Line", Times Educational Supplement, 12 February 1960.

28 Wykes, O., "The Crisis in French Education", Melbourne Studies in Education 1957-8, (Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1958), p. 100.

29 see section F1e.

30 Ehm, A., op. cit., p. 30.

31 quoted by Ehm, op. cit., p. 53.

32 Millot, A., op. cit., p. 17.

33 see section H3d. Details of this test were included in the

Bulletin Officiel du Ministère de l'Education Nationale, 18 October 1959.

34 Deska, N., Un Gâchis qui Défie les Réformes, (Paris, Edition du Scorpion: Collection Alternance, 1956), p. 46.

35 Hubert, R., op. cit., p. 167.

36 preface to Ehm, A., op. cit., p. iii.

37 cf Devèze, R., op. cit., Vol. I, p. 142.

38 for details, see section F4.

39 Brunold, C., "Orientation Pédagogique de l'Enseignement du Second Degré", Bulletin Officiel, 30 May 1952.

40 Details of these reforms are set out in section H3.

41 see section C2.

42 Gall, A., "Aspects majeurs de la réforme de l'enseignement", Education Nationale, (Paris, Institut Pédagogique National), 8 January 1959, p. 1.

43 for details, see section G2.

B CENTRALISATION OF AUTHORITY

1 BASIS OF THE ASSUMPTIONS

a Education as a public service: As in all Western countries, education is conceived in France as a public service, the control of which is in the hands of government authority. The extent to which this control is passed from central to local authority varies, however, from country to country, and it is of importance for us to see the reasons underlying the assumption in France that the control of education must remain centralised.

b Necessity for state unity and uniform control: At the time of the organisation of state education under Napoleon, the doctrine of centralisation expounded by the First Republic was no doubt already assumed. "A state administration," says Jean Debiesse in the U.N.E.S.C.O. treatise on French compulsory education, "was to be set up to supervise all teaching establishments and to ensure discipline and uniformity. In its desire to achieve national unity, the First Republic was in favour of a centralised and uniform system of education for all the provinces."[1] The very real necessity to rebuild national solidarity at the time of the Revolution, coupled with the dominating place which Paris holds in France and with the traditional regard of the people for central control of their affairs from that city, led naturally to a belief in a need

for centralisation in educational control. This belief in the need for uniformity within the country, so that no chance of dissension or of revolt might occur, is still alive among the French. An old and experienced mathematics teacher in Bordeaux said for example: "I believe that it is indispensable that common laws and regulations should govern public education. In fact all secondary schools should be more centralised so that for example the differences between lycées and collèges modernes might no longer exist."

c Distrust of local influences: "The government is not strong enough to allow any great degree of freedom in local administration as it is understood in Great Britain or the United States. The danger that revolutionary plots will get under way and threaten the stability of the Republic is still great, although the writer realises that such an observation is denied by nearly all Frenchmen."[2] These astonishing words were written by F.W. Roman in 1930. Perhaps the danger of insurrection is less now than then in France, but the fear of local influence in administration is certainly still great not only among the less well educated but also among all teachers and education leaders I met. Two quotations from teachers (one the headmaster of a lycée, the other a senior language master) will underline the point: "Centralisation is good," said the first, "for it protects from local tyrannies and allows for local eccentricities which often limit the cultural horizon too severely." "I believe," said the other,

"that centralisation is a sine qua non for the efficient and harmonious functioning of a vast ensemble... Dependent on Paris, education escapes the fluctuations (and the pressures they set up) of local political life."

d Maintenance of standards: This often vague fear of what might happen if education were subject to local control is generally supported of course by rationalised arguments which have virtually the force of assumptions, so little are they questioned. The main one is that standards of scholarship can be maintained only by a centralised authority. Certainly, the countries of Western Europe, England included, have tended to retain control of examining authorities and often there are central authorities for the establishing of syllabi at least for pre-university classes, though the same is not true of, say, America or Australia. The suggestion that standards could be as well maintained at this level by the individual universities is met with scorn by most French teachers; recent suggestions that the baccalauréat examination might again be so decentralised received little support, despite the problems which the huge numbers of candidates now sitting for this examination entail. In truth, the Frenchman probably experiences incompetence so frequently at the local level of administration that his fears are relatively well founded!

e Protection of status of public servants: The further rationalisation that the teacher employed by a local authority would lack prestige and be open to intrigue follows naturally. The "secondary" school teacher undoubtedly values his

detachment from the local scene and prefers to be an incorruptible servant of the state. He feels moreover that he is safe from inequalities of service: "The teacher from Brest and the teacher from Marseilles," said a loyal inhabitant of the latter city, "are placed in identical conditions."

f Historical development of central authority: Basically, however, the historical growth of France (and of her neighbours) has been through a gradual centralisation of power, from the time of Henri IV and of Louis XIV to the present. The example of Rome has remained clear; the centralised authority of the Roman Catholic church, its hierarchical organisation, was an obvious indication of the way in which secular authority should be organised. And more than any country in Europe perhaps, France had one dominating central city, Paris, from which all culture and all authority stemmed. That Paris would organise state education was always assumed; that local authorities would be incompetent to do it, the natural corollary of this assumption.

2 ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

The whole administrative structure of the state education system is centralised, and the duties and responsibilities at each level are clearly defined.

a The central department: The provision of education for a nation of over forty million people is a vast task, and its centralised headquarters in France are correspondingly vast. To the ordinary teacher - and perhaps more so to the average

parent - they must seem impossibly remote.

Under the Minister for Education and his cabinet (that is, his political assistants) is a complex structure of directions each charged with the overall control of a section of the educational facilities of the state and headed by a director. There is therefore at present a director specifically in charge of "secondary" education, another in charge of technical education, and so on. These have no direct liaison with each other but are responsible to the minister and the government. When the control of the education of adolescents is thus divided between three separate authorities - primary, "secondary", technical - there will inevitably be difficulties.

Within each direction there are a number of bureaux. In the case of "secondary" education these are:

1st bureau:	pedagogical studies and methodology; examinations and prize lists; supervision of independent schools.
2nd bureau:	administrative and service personnel of schools.
3rd bureau:	male teaching personnel.
4th bureau:	female teaching personnel.
5th bureau:	budget and statistical services.
6th bureau:	school finance; salaries and allowances; school materials; bursaries.[3]

The administrative staff within each bureau keeps a close and constant control of all the activities of the schools, and provides a constant stream of instructions to the teachers and administrators in the individual schools. To keep in touch

with the schools and to deal with specific problems on the spot there is a corps of "general inspectors". As the Précis Devèze says: "At the conclusion of their tours of inspection, they prepare reports in which they give an account of what they have observed and through which they enlighten the minister and the bureaux."[4] In addition there is a complicated structure of central committees dealing with particular problems.

b The "academic" administration: The académie is an administrative region based on a university and headed by a "rector". There are at present sixteen such regions in France, one for each university. The task of the rector is essentially one of supervision and of control. He is responsible for the transmission of central instructions, for the application of the programmes of work and methods laid down by the central authority, for the organisation of teacher training in the schools, for the financial provisions laid down by Paris, etc. He has essentially a large force of inspectors who must "provide each year an individual assessment of each member of the administrative and teaching personnel."[5]

c Departmental administration: The rigorous control of the activities of the educationist do not however stop there, for there is additionally a departmental administration[6] headed by one of the inspectors mentioned in the previous paragraph. In addition to his inspectorial duties, this officer is the rector's local representative and responsible in his own area for the carrying out of central instructions.

d Specialist services: It will already be apparent that teachers in various types of secondary schools are controlled by

different central authorities, and this applies also to the teachers within the one school in that certain specialists come within the jurisdiction of specialist services. Thus physical education teachers are under the control of the Director of Physical Education and Sports and not that of the Director of "Secondary" Schools. The methods and programmes which they will follow will have no necessary correlation with those of other subjects in the school, and their relations with other teachers will rarely be on an equal footing.

The rigid separation of the control of the various sections of secondary education is, I feel, a grave deficiency within the system, a weakness felt moreover by many teachers and educationists. Donald Miles notes the same danger when he speaks of "... a compartmentalisation with a minimum of mobility between compartments that is... thoroughly undemocratic."[7] There is every indication that reform is imminent in this matter.

3 CENTRALISED PROGRAMMES

a Programming committees: For each section of the education system there exists a conseil d'enseignement whose duties include the considering of any proposed changes in the programmes of study. Issued in the form of circulars or official instructions under the signature of the minister, these programmes are of course fixed for all schools, and changes are not easily made. When they have been frequent (as for example in "Civic and Moral Instruction"), the changes reflect an uncertainty about the rôle or the content of the subject in official quarters.

In general, programmes for secondary schools have been little changed during the course of this century except in the sciences.

b Examples of programming: The rigidity of the programmes and the strictly logical manner in which they are arranged permit, of course, great certainty in the teaching and ease in transferring pupils. They play a considerable part, moreover, in the maintenance of high academic standards. In French, for example, the set literary readings list the following books for all pupils, and have done so for many years:

1st year: La Fontaine (Fables), Molière (selections), Fénelon (Télémaque).

2nd year: La Fontaine, Daudet (Lettres de mon Moulin), Racine (Les Plaideurs), Hugo (certain poems).

3rd year: Corneille (Le Cid), Racine (Esther), Boileau (extracts), Chanson de Roland (in modern French), Molière (Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme, L'Avare), Sand (La Mare au Diable), Mérimée (extracts) ... etc.[8]

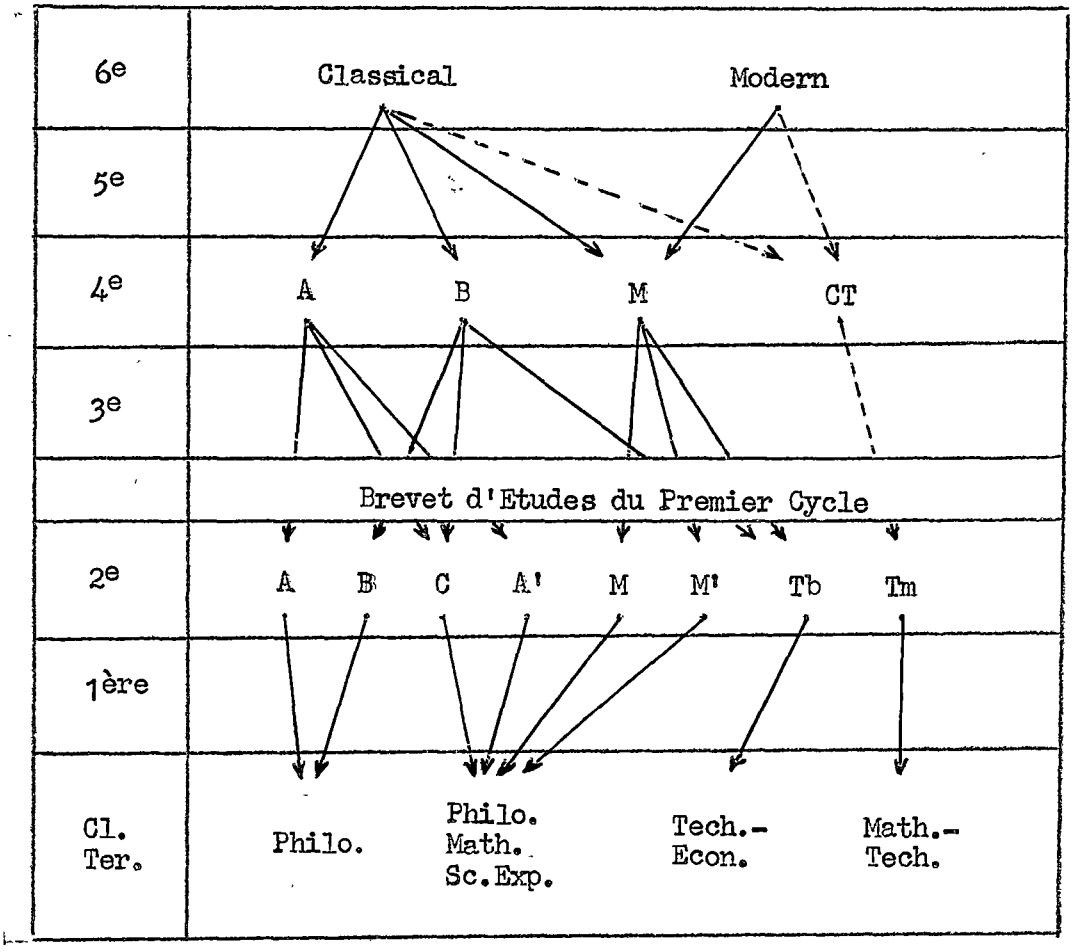
The language work in grammar and composition is extremely precise: in second year, verb forms "must be known imperturbably,"[9] personal pronouns must be taught in third year, a study of the construction of the paragraph must be made in fifth year, and so on. In the case of programmes in the final years of the primary course, the work is arranged in monthly sections; this is not done for "secondary" courses, but it seems certain that the centralised instructions are followed so closely that it is nearly true that the same work is being taught throughout

France to the same class level at any given time.

c Provision of standard text-books: One of the salutary aspects of this detailed, uniform provision of courses of study is the undoubted quality of text-books. Encouraged by the prospect of sales to very large numbers of students over a long period of years, the publishers have found it worthwhile - in fact inevitable where competition for markets is so keen - to spend much effort and planning on the presentation of first-class manuals. Certainly nothing produced in English - not even the most luxurious of American multicolour productions - compares, in my opinion, with the best examples of French school texts. Their quality lies as much in the care which has been given to exactness of detail and to clarity of presentation and documentation as in their undoubted beauty of form and standard of printing. They are the direct result of virtually immutable and universal programming by a centralised authority.

d Centralisation of courses and time-tables: No less rigid than the syllabi in individual subjects are the courses of study and the allocation of time for each subject. In effect, every lycée and collège is required to offer the same framework of courses to its pupils, the individual school having no power to introduce modifications or to offer other optional subjects.

These courses are shown in the diagram on the following page. The arrows indicate the courses to which each option can lead. A classical course includes Latin, a modern course does not.



KEY:

A	Latin with Greek
A'	Latin with Greek; science bias
B	Latin; two modern languages
C	Latin; one modern language; science bias
M	two modern languages; physical science bias
M'	one modern language; biological science bias
CT	technical bias
Tb	commercial/technical bias
Tm	mathematical/technical bias
Cl.Ter.	classes terminales (7th year)
Philo.	philosophy (literary bias)
Math.	mathematics
Sc.Exp.	experimental sciences
Tech.Econ.	commercial/technical bias
Math.Tech.	mathematical/technical bias[10]

For each subject the amount of time is allotted, and hence each course has a set number of hours of class study per week:

for example, in 2e these allocations are, for each course (the first figure represents the compulsory minimum):

A	24-26	B	24-28	M	26-28
A'	26-28	C	25-29	M'	25-29
		Tm	30-40 [11]		

e Co-ordination of subjects: The topic of subject co-ordination is not infrequently a live one among more experimental teachers in France, and the syllabi of the various subjects do permit of a good deal of co-operation between teachers of good-will, especially in relation to subjects such as French and history, history and art, Latin and French. It would be wrong, however, I think, to say that this is much more than accidentally provided for in the courses of study. It means adjusting the contents of the text-book, rearranging the topics in the official course, and this might be regarded as a dangerous practice by more reactionary colleagues or inspectors. The newer schools are nevertheless obviously keen about the possibilities and I saw examples of integrated courses of study in use which, while remaining sternly within the prescribed syllabi, were imaginative and effective.

f Teacher's use of programmes: The teacher is, quite obviously, not concerned with the establishment of his own course of study. In fact, I quickly realised in schools in France that the teachers found it difficult to conceive a logical course in a subject which could differ materially from what was provided in their text-books. The established courses and syllabi are assumed to be fixed and not within the control of

the teacher except in a very minor degree. "... The child's mind has in fact the right of access only to the official programmes, approved books, stipulated lessons, ex cathedra explanations..."[12] Schools present an absolutely monotonous uniformity in this regard, and the whole education system is coloured by it.

4 CENTRALISATION OF METHOD

a Methodology of programming committees: The official programmes in most cases contain details of the methods to be used in presenting the topics in the syllabus, often in considerable detail. Thus, for example, the method to be followed in the teaching of English (or any other foreign language) has not been modified to any extent for over fifty years. The details provided for teachers include a leçon-type allocating in detail the time to be devoted to each activity[13]:

1	Correction of grammar exercise	5 mins
2	Recitation of work learned by heart	5 mins
3	Oral interrogation on previous lesson	10 mins
4	Presentation of new vocabulary	12 mins
5	Pupils copy details of vocabulary	5 mins
6	Reading and explanation of new text	10 mins
7	Grammar explanation and practice	10 mins
8	Translation of text	3 mins

Teachers may - and generally do! - laugh about la méthode, but the assumption is that the central programming authority has the duty and right to demand a set form, and that it will

inevitably know best what that form must be for maximum effectiveness. Teachers unused to experimentation are unlikely to desire a change of method in any case. (Bouchet claimed in fact that "not even with the aid of ministerial instructions can the body of teachers, in no way prepared for the adventure of 'active education', be persuaded to change."[14])

b Experiments in method: It would be false of course to assume that no thought is given in France to methodology. The regular publication of the excellent "Cahiers Pédagogiques" is evidence of the amount of experiment being carried out. Some of this takes place in the lycées pilotes, but contributions to the "Cahiers" come also from many other teachers. The majority of the proposals remain theoretical unfortunately, and the main mass of the pupils are unaffected. Nor is this, I hasten to add, a situation limited to French schools. Teachers willing to experiment with methodology will always no doubt be in the minority. It is certain, however, that in France the teachers in most schools receive little encouragement or opportunity to try new ideas. A. Berge, contributing to the critical study "Bon ou Mauvais Elève", wrote recently: "It is of course the duty of the teacher to be acquainted with teaching methods, and it is to be hoped that, in the future, school organisation will permit him to practise more and more freely those which seem best to him in relation to the needs of the children in his class."[15] At present, this facility seems remote.

c Method within the individual school: Nothing in the

traditional French lycée or collège seems to me more frustrating than the lack of contact between the various teachers, and not only the staff as a whole but also the teachers of individual subjects. The methods employed in different classes and in different years do not vary much, but the spirit of the teaching can vary enormously. It is then that the French pedagogue finds his grace: "The letter of the law may be centralised," said a fine mathematics teacher, who was gloriously ignoring it in a boys' school in Bordeaux, "but the spirit is still free - thank Heaven!" It is, in my view, precisely the opposite which should be the aim, if the school is to have its maximum effect on the child.

5 CENTRALISATION OF INSPECTION AND PROMOTION

a General and academic inspections: As we have seen[16], provision is made for a corps of inspectors by both the central department and the académies. The former are rarely concerned with individual teachers: they are engaged rather on a national level in the solution of particular problems which often involve the visiting of schools in different parts of the country. The academic inspectors are directly concerned with assessing the work of teachers and of administrators.

b Methods of promotion: After inspection, teachers are listed on one of three promotion lists. There are ten levels on the ladder of promotion, each representing an average of two or three years of teaching. Promotion may be à l'ancienneté in which case the teacher will rarely be transferred, or au petit choix or au grand choix in which case he may and generally

will be transferred. Transfer may be to any school in the country in the latter case. The struggle inevitably for many teachers is for promotion and transfer to a school in the Paris region. Administrative staff follow a similar scheme, with the position of censeur[17] at the top of the scale. The position of headmaster is also applied for, but without choice of school, and involves two years' probation before final appointment.

c Effects of centralisation on transfer: One of the least satisfactory features of centralisation for many teachers in France seems to be that of the perils of transfer. The young teacher is, it seems, almost certain to find himself posted far from home: and France encloses within its borders great differences of environment and temperament. The heart-burnings of a middle-aged married man who had just completed training for secondary teaching are no doubt typical enough. His first post was in Aubusson, in the isolated Massif Central, over 230 miles from Paris and 470 miles from his home in Saarbrucken. The effect on schools of the transfer of talented teachers just when they have become established is well known. However, such transfers seem to be much less frequent than one might expect: many teachers apparently prefer to forego rapid promotion in order to remain in a familiar school.

d Dominant position of Paris: The domination of Paris is immediately apparent to the visitor to France: no other French city remotely approaches it in appeal and glamour - or in cultural facilities. For the teacher, there is also the added appeal of higher salaries paid in the capital.[18] There is

therefore a constant draining of provincial areas of their best teachers, so that the proportion of agrégés in the lycées and collèges of Paris is significantly higher than in country areas. The centralised promotion and transfer schemes may serve to perpetuate inequalities rather than equalities in the state education system in this case.

6 CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE ASSUMPTIONS

Few countries have a more highly centralised teaching service than France: in methodology and in administration the secondary schools of the land present an amazing uniformity, a uniformity which has some very real educational advantages, but which has undoubtedly been one of the major reasons for the difficulties experienced in introducing major reforms to the education system.

a Unwieldiness and artificiality: Addressing a seminar of junior administrative officers (mainly surveillants généraux) in Paris in November 1959, Monsieur Voisin, a director of one of the bureaux of the central administration, was at pains to stress that these central administrative offices "are becoming more and more enormous; while decentralisation may not be possible, 'deconcentration' is becoming inevitable..." The vastness of the French system, providing for millions of children in many thousands of schools from the one central headquarters, has become almost incomprehensible. With the raising of the leaving age, the rapid increase in numbers entering secondary schools because of population growths and

other influences, and the widening of the scope of secondary studies, the problems faced by the directorate of "secondary" education are now of a very different order from those of earlier periods, when many children did not proceed with education beyond primary school.

A growing impersonality and impassibility as the structure becomes more and more complicated is already obvious. The impersonality of an official instruction has in fact for long replaced the personal relationship found so valuable in de-centralised systems. Bouchet writes that in education in France the "first essential" is to refer immediately to "un texte", i.e. to an official instruction.[19] The attendant lack of vitality and slowness to reform are increasingly serious at the present time. "The extraordinarily centralised character of its administrative system gives rise to a heaviness, a uniformity, a desire to systematise and regulate, which prevent the manifestation of any personal initiative from which worthwhile suggestions for improvement could come,"[20] says Hubert in his history of education in France. This "ponderous obstacle to the process of change"[21] has its inevitable effect on the teacher, as we have already noted, and his traditional disregard for pedagogy and his predisposition to academic research independent of his teaching are no doubt conditioned by it. There is equally an effect on the public who feel inevitably that they can play little part in modifying the massive progress of the system: "Public opinion, too indifferent to care, gives in quickly and easily to the state in matters

concerning education,"[22] as Ehm claimed. Only on a political level is the public aroused, and then reveals itself to be more concerned with personalities and parties than with proposals. "The involvement of educational policy in party politics seems to be an inevitable concomitant of centralised control,"[23] says American educationist Donald Miles. Certainly the vastness of the structure on the national level hinders reform and precludes effective participation in its formulation by individuals, whether teachers or parents.

b Difficulties of experimentation: One of the major weaknesses in the schools, I believe, is the assumption that experiment in education is outside the competency of the classroom teacher. With some refreshing exceptions, almost always in the lycées pilotes, teachers are content to remain strictly within the written instructions. Reform, it is assumed, must come from above. "Reform works from the top down rather than the reverse," claims Miles, "an all-important difference to the usual process of educational change... A reform initiated by the top echelon of the administration is something to be attacked more than defended, to be criticised more than constructively worked upon."[24] It should be noted that reform from above has been slow in coming in France, and that teachers have therefore had little experience of it; now that reforms are being instituted, Miles' criticism is being abundantly justified, for the general attitude to them seems to be one of suspicion and conservatism. The lack of encouragement of experiment in method is also quite marked;

once one is away from the several experimental lycées, there is every evidence that headmasters and local administrators frown upon departures from the traditional methods and positively prohibit any variation of the state syllabi.

In this connection, J.B. Conant's remark on one of the great advantages of a decentralised education system is worth quoting. "There is," he says, "ample opportunity for experimentation, and there is no lack of diversity, as anyone who tries to describe what is a typical high school soon discovers. Without this diversity and the healthy rivalry between cities and towns and between one state and another, our public secondary schools could hardly have succeeded as well as they have. The bad feature... is the existence of some very inferior schools indeed."[25] The risk in France may be that no school at all will really escape the latter qualification.

c Advantages of centralisation: We must not however omit consideration of the advantages undoubtedly conferred by a highly centralised education system. Not the least of these concerns the maintenance of high and consistent standards of intellectual work. The long period during which the programme in any subject remains unchanged gives opportunity for teachers to know intimately what is required, and to discover effective means of presenting this material. Moreover, as I have already mentioned, it leads to the provision of text-books of exceptional worth. The syllabi can progress from year to year with the by no means unwarrented assumption that the previous year's work is known well by most pupils.

Teachers appointed to no matter what school in France know

what standard they will find there and what level the pupils there are expected to reach. This is no small advantage, as teachers acquainted with local education authorities will recognise.

The nation-wide uniformity of the final examinations (especially the baccalauréat) is, I think, the greatest factor of all in the achieving of high standards of scholarship throughout the country. Whether this high standard is a legitimate educational objective may be open to question[26], but while it remains a primary aim of educationists it is certain that the external, state-controlled examination is the dominating influence in ensuring a dazzlingly high level of competence by the best students.

The transfer of pupils, though admittedly not a great problem in the stable communities of France, is undoubtedly facilitated by the centralised system. Teacher transfer is equally made simple. There is virtually no observable difference between dozens and dozens of secondary schools in France, and the transferred pupil or teacher needs in most cases to make no adaptation at all to be completely at home. The transfer even from lycée or collège to complementary course or vice versa is equally simple for pupils, the curricula being virtually identical even though the teachers have in general come from different types of training.[27] Only in a very highly centralised and uniform system is this likely to be so.

In France I believe that the public attitude to education is favourably affected by federal control. Conversations with

teachers and administrators confirm the impression that local councils carry little prestige or authority in France and are often open to intrigue. The impersonality of the lycée or collège, controlled by unknown forces in Paris, is sufficient to ensure that it will be supported - equally impersonally, perhaps - by the general public. Criticism is rarely of the individual school, even less of the individual teacher. Criticism of the state is however - as in all countries - readily forthcoming, at no time more than at present, as France aims to regain some of its former prestige in the world and as reforms of cherished educational institutions are being made.

d Where centralisation might be retained: Having regard to the historical background of secondary education in France, there are, I think, at least four fields in which France would be unwise to relinquish centralised control. These are: (i) in overall policy and regulation, for the dangers inherent in local control in these are at the present stage very real; (ii) in salaries and allowances, for local authorities would vary widely in the manner in which such matters were handled; (iii) in general syllabi provisions, but not, as at present, in the detail of courses and programmes, the prescriptions of which at present preclude healthy experimentation and diversity; and (iv) in the final examinations, for the prestige and value of the baccalauréat (and to a lesser extent of the B.E.P.C. and the Certificat de Fin d'Etudes) is not likely to be retained by any form of decentralised examination system.

e The achievement of some decentralisation: The assumption

that all aspects of the educational machine must be under central control is however, I think, a dangerous one. The "Compagnons de l'Université" were already suggesting some decentralisation in 1918[29], but their suggestions fell on very barren soil. Nevertheless, the académies[30] are well suited to provide a measure of local control, and carry at the same time the prestige attaching to their universities (which is undoubtedly an important factor in the French educational environment.) The value of decentralisation carried to the extent to which it is practised in Great Britain or the U.S.A. may be doubted when transferred to a French setting. Decentralisation on this scale is, as Olive Wykes points out, "so alien to French tradition that one hesitates even to mention it."[31]

At the compromise level of the académie, despite the current tendency to move the other way, I believe a great deal could be done to lighten the massiveness and artificiality of the present administration. In the matter of staffing, the académie seems to provide an opportunity for a more personal and flexible control. University graduates would often prefer to remain within the "academic" area of their own university - with the problem of the attraction of Paris still present, however.

The central administration could equally be relieved of responsibility in many fields involving material conditions, the provision of school buildings, school stock and so on. The remoteness of Paris in matters of this sort is often

apparently most frustrating for growing provincial areas.

More controversially, I believe that the questions of curricula and courses might with advantage be shared between the central administration and the académies. The lack of enterprise in these fields in France will not be overcome until the leaders in the local regions feel that they can play a part in providing more exactly for conditions in their own area. "The possibility of adapting our methods, even our curriculum," of which a teacher spoke in Bordeaux as though it were achieved at present, should be provided. The centralised, impersonal regulation of these matters has had a retarding and deadening effect which might very well be overcome if some of the responsibility were taken at the "academic" level.

In summary, it seems to me that as secondary education becomes universal in France so that the complexity of its administration is greatly increased, the demand for a more flexible and human approach will grow. A gradual limiting of the scope of the central authority to the control of overall policy might then be coupled with a gradual widening of the field of action of the académie, and of the individual school, to the eventual advantage of the whole education system.

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1 Debiesse, J., Compulsory Education in France, (Paris, U.N.E.S.C.O., 1951), p. 16. The italics are mine.

2 Roman, F.W., The New Education in Europe, (London,

Routledge, 1930), p. 147.

3 see Devèze,R., Précis Devèze, (5th ed., Paris, Institut Pédagogique National, 1958), Vol. I, p. 33.

4 ib., p. 46.

5 ib., p. 49.

6 The "département" is an administrative region resembling the Australian state though smaller in area. There are ninety-two departments in France.

7 Miles, D.W., Recent Reforms in French Secondary Education, (New York, Teachers' College, Columbia University, 1953), p. 21.

8 Vuibert, Horaires et Programmes de l'Enseignement du Second Degré, (21st ed., Paris, Vuibert, 1958), pp. 13-16.

9 ib., p. 14.

10 Néret, Le Bac. et ses Débouchés, (Paris, Néret, 1958), pp. 12-13; for details of time allocations, see section D2a.

11 Vuibert, op. cit., p. 6.

12 Bouchet, H., L'Individualisation de l'Enseignement, (2nd ed., Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1948), p. 20.

13 cf. Roger, G., Conseils Pratiques pour l'Enseignement de l'Anglais, (Paris, Institut Pédagogique National, undated), p. 6 et seq.

14 Bouchet, H., op. cit., Introduction, q.v.

15 Berge, A., (ed.), Bon ou Mauvais Elève, (Paris, Editions Sociales Françaises, 1957), p. 80.

16 see sections B2a and B2b.

17 see section I2c.

18 see section J2a.

19 Bouchet, H., op. cit., p. 215.

20 Hubert, R., Histoire de la Pédagogie, (Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1949), p. 168.

21 Miles, D.W., op. cit., p. 2.

22 Ehm, A., Education et Culture - Problèmes Actuels, (Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1942), p. 16.

23 Miles, D.W., op. cit., p. 136.

24 ib., p. 85.

25 Conant, J.B., Education and Liberty, (New York, Harvard University Press, 1956), p. 26.

26 cf. sections H4a and H4b.

27 details are given in section G.

28 see section B1c.

29 "Compagnons de l'Université", L'Université Nouvelle, (Paris, Fischbacker, 1918), pp. 51-58.

30 see section B2b.

31 Wykes, O., "The Crisis in French Education", Melbourne Studies in Education 1957-8, (Melbourne University Press, 1958), p. 89.

C STATE AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS

1 BASIS OF THE ASSUMPTION

a Period of compulsory education: The leaving age is at present fourteen in France; it is intended that it be raised to fifteen in 1966 and sixteen in 1967. Already more than 65 per cent of pupils remain at school beyond the age of fourteen; in Paris the percentage is 84. "When the new law comes into operation eight years after the passing of the present bill," says the official decree, "... it will serve only to ratify a movement so spontaneous and wide-spread that the pressure of the law would be placed on only 35 per cent of our adolescents if it were enforced tomorrow."[1] That primary education is compulsory (either in state-controlled schools, in private schools or with private tutors) has long been accepted of course. However, the assumption here is clearly that the state should provide education for all adolescents, an assumption of recent origin in France, but one which is already little challenged by other than extreme reactionaries.

b Free secondary education: The assumption that universal secondary education should be provided entails the assumption that such education should be free. This again is a concept of recent origin in France, where even "secondary" education

for the selected few was not provided free until 1933.[2] The extent to which education is "free" varies to some extent of course in various countries, and it may well be that the provision of secondary schooling for children of working-class parents, especially in rural areas, would meet with considerable opposition unless adequate financial provision were made. It seems certain that the authorities are aware of this and prepared to increase the number of bursaries available for pupils in state secondary schools.

c Co-existence of state and private schools: The assumption that state and private schools should exist side by side is entailed in the expression "liberté d'enseignement". There is not, I think, at the present time any considerable body of opinion prepared to support the suppression of all private schools. As we shall see[3], that battle has been bitterly fought in the past, but the area of controversy now lies rather in the field of state aid to the private schools. Those who oppose the use of state funds for the private schools base their case on three main arguments. They invoke first the principle of laicity. This principle, defined in the Law of 1905 ("The Republic neither recognises, nor supports, nor subsidises any creed"[4]), clearly does not "permit the state to subsidise the church schools from public funds,"[5] they claim. Moreover, the church schools provide useless competition with the state schools. "There exists no valid reason why a Catholic pupil should not feel at home"[6] in the state schools. And, indeed, there is positive danger in such segregation: "The unity of

the Nation risks being lost through it."[7] The supporters of state aid argue from the concept of freedom of the individual, which is a basic tenet of the Republic, recognised in education by laws passed in 1850, 1883 and 1919[8], and written into the constitutions of the Fourth and Fifth Republics. Parents have the right to choose between public and private schools, and the expenses of the latter are in many cases beyond their means: they are so heavy, in fact, that "it is impossible to cover them with the school fees and the voluntary contributions of the Catholic people."[9] The state should therefore provide financial assistance. The Catholics argue further of course that "the awakening of faith cannot be separated from the awakening of intelligence,"[10] and that the church schools exist for this purpose. The controversy has been prolonged and heated, and the solutions contained in the Debré law, outlined below[11], are very far from satisfactory to a large section of the population.

d Secularity of the state system: The assumption that since the state recognises no creed there can be no doctrinal teaching in state schools is widespread. It is one of the basic features of French education, always stressed in official literature and supported by the vast majority of teachers in the state schools. It is assumed that there will be no form of religious teaching or ceremony in them, though this does not entail the assumption that moral teaching may be neglected.[12] An interesting sidelight of this insistence is the force of Roman-Greek cultural influence in the schools at the expense of Biblical background.[13] The careful provisions made for

pupils in state schools to receive religious instruction outside school hours (and outside school premises, where possible) - the Thursday holiday was provided originally for the purpose - are evidence of the fact that the fight for laicity was not easily won.[14] Nor, it seems, is it finally won now. There are many today in France who view the latest provisions of the Debré law concerning the appointment of chaplains in "secondary" schools[15] as a new challenge to the secular basis of state education. It is obvious that the defenders of the Catholic thesis and those who oppose state aid are as unlikely to agree on a solution to this problem as to the wider problems of the existence of the two types of schools. It can nevertheless be fairly claimed at present, I feel, that the assumptions concerning secularity in the state schools have not been effectively undermined.

2 HISTORY OF CHURCH SCHOOLS

a Jean Baptiste de la Salle: The eighteenth century in France saw a great growth of schools organised by various Roman Catholic orders, including the Oratorians and (up to 1773) the Jesuits, and notably by the Christian Brothers under the leadership of Jean Baptiste de la Salle. They pioneered elementary education and they were in a sense originators of higher primary education. By the time of the Revolution, these schools, providing education for poor children, were widespread in France. The Christian Brothers had 116 schools open in France, and six in other countries, with 36,000 pupils, in

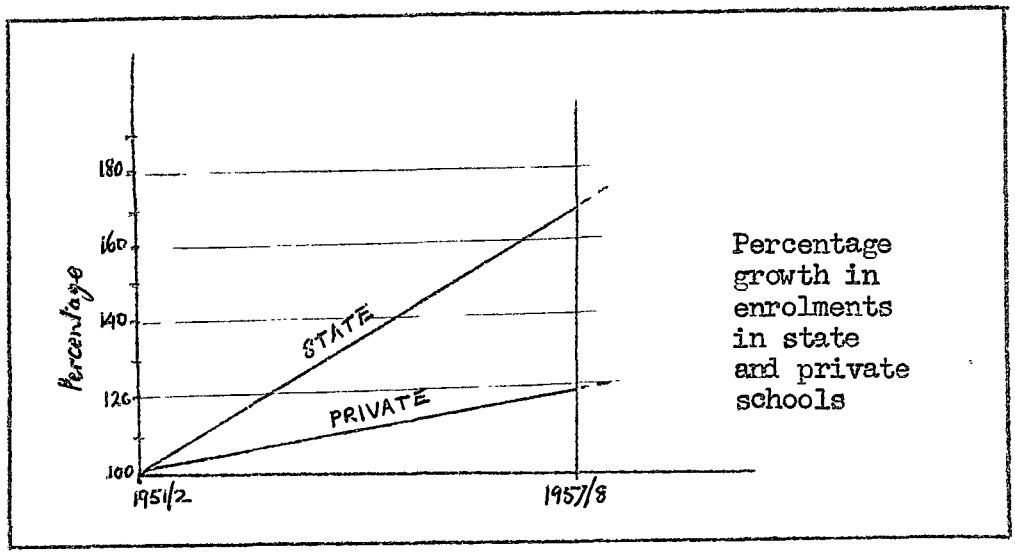
1789[16]. Private tutoring was due to be replaced by class instruction, and for this great change the Catholic teaching orders were in large measure responsible.

b The nineteenth century: Napoleon, as he set about the reform of French education, took for his model the rules and organisational methods of the Catholic teaching orders.[17] He recognised the Christian Brothers as the "authorised teachers of the common people" (in the primary schools).[18] But his secondary schools were staffed by teachers "under the control of the head of state"[19], and it was undoubtedly in these that he was chiefly interested. As the nineteenth century progressed, it was obvious that there was developing an increasingly violent struggle for influence in education between the church and the state. After the Second Republic had temporarily claimed "neutrality" for state education (the Carnot Law), there followed almost immediately the Falloux Law of 1850, giving the church a large say in the matter - "practically the abdication of the state before the church,"[20] says Palméro. Later still, the law associated with the name of Jules Ferry was just as violent a move in the opposite direction. "1789 secularised all our institutions, particularly the institution of the family, since it made marriage a civil contract," thundered Ferry in the Senate in 1880, "and I say that the secularisation of our institutions must necessarily, sooner or later, end in the secularisation of public education."[21] The 1886 Law provided that only lay teachers were allowed in the state schools and all distinctive religious

teaching was abolished.

c State-church separation: After a period of reconciliation, when many teaching orders set up new schools but which was spoilt by the bitterness of the Dreyfus Case, came the 1904 Act which provided complete separation of church and state. The right of church organisations to found schools was taken away, and many teaching orders were expelled from France. The church schools were given ten years to close, but a number remained in operation by altering their ownership to an individual or to a private company. And, when these regulations were suspended in 1915, the church schools gradually grew again in importance. The Vichy government restored the right to teach in September 1940, and this law has remained in force under the Fourth and Fifth Republics.[22]

d Recent decline in numerical importance: The graph below[23] will serve to show that the private secondary schools have been growing in recent years at a rate significantly inferior to that of the state schools.



In fact, the actual total number of pupils has increased in the private schools, but the number of schools, more or less stationary for a decade, has recently fallen slightly (from 1647 in 1954-5 to 1638 in 1957-8). Many small private schools are obviously finding it difficult to survive in the post-war world of rapidly rising prices, and some have been forced to close.

3 RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF STATE AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS

a Numbers of secondary schools and pupils: The figures quoted are for the school year 1957-8, the latest for which detailed statistics were available. In that year the numbers of "secondary" pupils in the two systems (excluding those in technical sections) were[24]:

	State	Private
Boys	273,757	127,017
Girls	281,327	115,028
Total	555,084	242,045

In so far as numbers of schools are concerned, the figures for "secondary" schools are[25]:

State	886
Private	1638

Average enrolments are about 600 for state and 150 for private "secondary" schools.

In order to make some comparison between total enrolments of pupils of secondary age in state and private schools, it is necessary to add pupils in complementary courses, those in

technical classes (technical collèges and apprenticeship centres mainly) and those completing their education in the terminal classes of primary schools. The totals (necessarily approximate) are then[26]:

	State	Private
Lycées and collèges	555,000	242,000
Complementary courses	352,000	93,000
Primary grades	730,000	130,000
Technical classes	270,000	200,000
TOTAL	1,907,000	665,000
(numbers to nearest thousand)		

Unfortunately full comparative figures seem not to be available for the number of teachers or for the degree of training of teachers in the two systems.[27]

b Educational expenses in the two systems: The following figures apply to the year 1955, but it seems improbable that the comparison they afford has been invalidated since that time:

Cost per pupil per year		
Public:	lycées and collèges	1170 NF
	complementary courses	585 NF
	technical collèges	2000 NF
	approx. average of these	950 NF
Private:		750 NF[28]

The total cost of education in the two systems is of course hardly relevant, since the state bears many extra charges

which do not apply to the private schools. In fact the state spends about seven times as much on education (at all levels) as do the private schools.

4 THE PROBLEM OF STATE AID TO PRIVATE SCHOOLS

a History of state aid: The efforts of the private schools, or more exactly of the Catholic authorities, to gain recognition of their claim that the state should provide them with some form of financial support met with no real success until 1951. Two commissions (headed by André Philip and Paul Boncour respectively) had examined the problem, but the Loi Barangé was the first legislation granting more than what the Lapie Report calls "narrowly limited assistance"[29]. This law applied only to primary schools, but granted a fixed sum per pupil per term to both state and private schools, these monies being used for buildings in the public sector but for the raising of salaries in the private schools. The Loi Marie provided some additional bursaries for secondary education, and these were available to those private schools which were "approved". These first victories were of course still very limited; they "calmed only momentarily," says the Lapie Report, "the impatience of the private church schools."[30] The Debré Law of 1959 was to be a much more substantial blow to the opponents of state aid, however.

b The Lapie Report and the Law of 1959: In the latter part of 1959 (June 25 - October 29), a commission sat to examine the question and to report to the government. Certain of its recommendations were rejected, but its proposals for

the provision of state aid were included in the bill presented to the French parliament and passed at the end of 1959. The Minister of Education (M. André Boulloche) resigned over last-minute changes in this bill (which was opposed by the Socialists, Radicals and Communists), and the prime minister, M. Debré, secured its passage (by 427 votes to 71 in the National Assembly).

The preamble to the law claims that the aim is co-operation with the private schools to ensure the best educational organisation possible: "Public education is preferred," it states, "by the great majority of families; it is because its all-embracing nature and its standards ensure for it the confidence of the Nation that it can offer this co-operation. Nevertheless it is a fact that many families... entrust their children to private schools which are in financial difficulties and which cannot pay their staff a sufficient salary."[31]

The new law, based on the Lapie recommendations, offers four possibilities to the private schools:

1 integration, with financial settlement and transfer of qualified staff, into the state system;

2 contract of association, in which case expenses concerned with the actual teaching are taken over by the state which demands in return that its regulations and programmes be followed; the schools remain independent however outside the area of their contract;

3 simple contract, in which case salaries of qualified teachers are paid by the state and the state takes

pedagogic and financial control of the school;

4 complete independence, as at present.

"Conciliation committees" are provided for to deal with the difficulties involved in the "contract", and a time limit of nine years applies to applications for the types of partial integration outlined in 2 and 3 above.

5 STATE BOARDING SCHOOLS

a "Pensionnat" and "demi-pensionnat": Characteristic of state secondary schools in France has always been the number of pupils who board away from home and are provided for by the schools. This is a result of the historical evolution of the lycées from the "army barracks" organisation established by Napoleon.[32] There are broadly two types of pupils provided for: those who live far from the school and board permanently during term time at the school, and (more numerous) those who have one or two meals at the school daily and whose study time is supervised out of school hours (generally between five and seven p.m.).

The life of the pensionnaire is traditionally a hard one, highly regulated and admitting little relaxation. Sunday is normally the only day on which pupils leave the school and then only in organised groups. Days are long, generally beginning no later than six-thirty a.m., and study is carefully supervised out of class hours.

b Reasons for their importance: Quite apart from the fact that they are a traditional part of the French education system, the pensionnats are much admired by many Frenchmen as

providing some of the same values as Englishmen attribute to the public schools of their country: "For an adolescent desirous of breaking with the too childish atmosphere of the home, where he is always considered as a baby, the internat in the classical style, impersonal and less solicitous, can permit an apprenticeship in liberty and a re-establishing of scholastic values in their right perspective,"[33] wrote Paulette Dubuisson recently. In an earlier age, before rapid transport was so readily available, Henri Marion could claim before a sub-committee on discipline in secondary schools that "the boarding school seems to be a necessity in our society, for without it half the young people in France who take up secondary work would not do so..."[34] This seems to me still to be the assumption of the majority of teachers and administrators in France.

c The tendency towards abolition: There are, of course, official moves for the gradual abolishing of the pensionnats. They are, says the exposé des motifs attached to the education act of 6 January 1959, "five times more expensive that the externat - and from the point of view of psychological and moral education much less satisfactory."[35] But their complete disappearance does not seem to be imminent. (The proportion of "secondary" pupils who are internes - about twenty percent - has hardly varied in the last ten years). They are from most points of view unsatisfactory as a form of education, and I would not wish to defend the removal of children from their homes at this period of their lives except in exceptional circumstances, but they have been responsible for the upbringing of so many celebrated Frenchman in the last hundred and fifty years that the assumption remains strong in France that they are essential.

6 CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE MAIN ASSUMPTIONS

a The leaving age: The raising of the leaving age to sixteen can be regarded only as a tardy move to bring France into line with other European nations, forced upon the country both by changes in other countries and by the increasing tendency of French youth to stay on at school. The implication that the government has been moving behind rather than ahead of public opinion is in this case to a great extent true. Certainly no educationist or educated parent in France would deny that the step is overdue. The old assumption that secondary education need be provided for only a proportion of the population is immediately challenged by this move, and the education authorities are aware of the need for greater course flexibility to provide for this.[36] This new understanding of the rôle of secondary education is, I believe, soundly based, and I am critical only of the lack of concern over the detailed organisation of and provision for the new groups of adolescents who will now need to be catered for.

b Co-existence and secularity: The problems concerning the part to be played in secondary education by the state and by private and church interests are not, of course, susceptible of easy solution. The arguments based on liberty depend on a concept which cannot be refuted without questioning the whole structure of French political development. Yet there is undoubtedly a valid case to be made for the control of education to be

exclusively in the hands of the state. In the same way, the arguments for the maintenance of a completely secular approach to education by the state are not easy to refute without questioning the state's relationship to the church. It is impossible to decide such matters in a way satisfactory to all; no clearly right or wrong approach can be found; nor is it possible in any way, I think, to achieve an acceptable compromise. At the time of the Lapie report, William Clarke, writing in the London "Observer", pointed to "a genuine division of opinion in France which could not be made to vanish by a touch of the President's magic wand and the invocation of national unity."[37] It would be naïve not to accept the fact that such a division exists. The problem is then largely concerned with ensuring that the division is not widened or strengthened by unwise action in either direction. Co-existence of state and private schools is, I believe, a good thing for France; the secular basis of education in the state schools is equally to be supported. The dangers are that either (i) the private schools, i.e. the church influence, will become too powerful, or (ii) the state, under the influence of socialist and radical opinion, will attempt to alter the present position fundamentally. Of the two, undoubtedly the first is the more real danger at the present time.

c <u>State aid to non-state schools</u>: The non-state schools have certainly won a victory of some importance

in the legislation contained in the Debré law. While the state has ensured that its control over the private schools to which aid is to be given is close and effective (the application of the Debré law is apparently to be quite strict), it seems most improbable that in fact no bias will be evident in the teaching in the Catholic schools. It is even more true, of course, that many of the church schools were in urgent need of aid if they were to be retained at all as an alternative to the state system. Naturally enough, a good deal will depend, as the "Times Educational Supplement" said at the time, on just how the act is put into practice[38] - an anti-clerical education minister could undoubtedly greatly limit its effectiveness. There is at least the hope that by its careful administration there will be avoided, at any rate for the time being, the worst excesses of a conflict which has been more or less continuous in France since the time of Napoleon.

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1 La Prolongation de la Scolarité Obligatoire et la Réforme de l'Enseignement Public, (Paris, Institut Pédagogique National, 1959), p. 6.

2 see section A2g.

3 see sections C2c,d.

4 Neutralité de l'Enseignement Public, (Paris, Institut Pédagogique National, 1959), p. 1. This pamphlet summarises the law concerning neutrality and religious

teaching in French state schools.

5 Commission chargée de l'étude des rapports entre l'état et l'enseignement privé: Rapport Général, (Paris, Ministère de l'Education Nationale, 1959), p. 167.

6 ib.

7 ib.

8 see for example: Devèze, R., Précis Devèze, (5th ed., Paris, Institut Pédagogique National, 1958), Vol. I, p. 20.

9 Rapport Général, op. cit., p. 166.

10 ib., p. 166.

11 see section C4c.

12 cf. sections A4d and F1e.

13 cf. Hubert, R., Histoire de la Pédagogie, (Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1949), p. 171.

14 see sections C2b,c,d.

15 The Debré law provides that chaplains may be appointed by headmasters, though classes must be held out of school time. The religious authorities may, if they desire, make a charge for these classes which may in special circumstances be held on school premises. Cf. Rapport Général, op. cit., pp. 128 et seq.

16 Palméro, Histoire des Institutions et des Doctrines par les Textes, (Paris, S.U.D.E.L., 1951), p. 250.

17 see section A2b.

18 Palméro, op. cit., p. 287.

19 ib.

20 ib., p. 294.

21 ib., p. 306.

22 For details of recent moves, see Wykes, O., The Fifth Republic and the Catholic Schools, in Melbourne Studies in Education 1959-60, (Melbourne, M.U.P., 1960), pp. 72 et seq.

23 Informations Statistiques, (Paris, Institut Pédagogique National), April/May 1959, p. 233.

24 ib., p. 232.

25 Some private secondary schools are of course sections of schools which enrol primary pupils also.

26 These figures are all approximations calculated from Informations Statistiques, op. cit., issues from January to June 1959. The majority of the private technical classes are controlled by chambers of commerce, private industry, local municipalities or other non-church groups. The Rapport Général, op. cit., p. 164, gives the following figures for technical classes:

state:	324,000
Catholic:	107,000
other private:	155,000

27 The Rapport Général, op. cit., p. 62, gives the following figures for "secondary" schools:

	state	private (incl. part-time)
agrégés:	5,500	106
non-agrégés:	19,000	20,500

28 Institut National de la Statistique et des Etablissements Economiques, Coût et Développement de l'Enseignement en

France, (Paris, Imprimerie Nationale, 1958), p. 43 et seq.

29 Rapport Général, op. cit., p. 23.

30 ib., p. 24.

31 quoted from "Une Politique Nouvelle Essentiellement Fondée sur l'Idée de Coopération", Le Figaro, 19 December 1959.

32 see sections A2b and A4a.

33 Berge, A., (ed.), Bon ou Mauvais Elève, (Paris, Editions Sociales Françaises, 1957), p. 132.

34 Buisson, F., and Farrington, F., (ed.), French Educational Ideals of Today, (London, Harrap, 1920), p. 238.

35 La Prolongation de la Scolarité Obligatoire et la Réforme de l'Enseignement Public, (Paris, Institut Pédagogique National, 1959), p. 12.

36 cf. section D3e.

37 Clarke, W., "Religion in the Schools", The Observer, 3 January 1960.

38 "Church School Imbroglio", Times Educational Supplement, 1 January 1960, p. 7.

D THE CULTURAL BIAS

1 BASIS OF THE ASSUMPTION

a The aims of education primarily cultural: There is no aspect of education in France where greater unanimity prevails than that of the importance of cultural development. Time after time, teachers I interviewed in France began with the same sort of remark: "We can never insist enough on culture: to train scientists is all very well, but we must above all give pupils a taste for reading and cultural development." "Culture is essential. It must be the goal of education. Unfortunately today pupils are becoming less and less cultivated." "A solid culture prepares one in advance and permits one to develop a balanced outlook. The day when practical training replaces it, I think that thus equipped we will all be heading for disaster." These remarks were replies to a suggestion that the stress on culture was merely an outworn tradition in France.

Monsieur Brunold, when Director-General of Education, spoke to representatives of Parents' Associations and made clear the official attitude: "No force in the world," he said, "can prevent parents from wanting to give their children the highest cultural development possible, for, in modern society, culture is a heritage more solid than gold. The Associations

of Parents do not want any compulsory segregation... We are obliged to accept all those who wish to profit from that culture which it is the glory of the French secondary education system to give."[1]

Historically, the cultural bias in French secondary education goes back to the humanitarian tradition inherent in all European education, but it was France's special claim when the lycées were established that their aim was "to develop, not the particular aptitudes of each individual, but the general faculties of the mind."[2] The constant separation of the disinterested, higher fields of cultural growth and the mundane training for specific trades has been basic to the thinking of French educators ever since. "What counts," says Deska, "is culture!"[3]

There are still few in France, I feel, who stop to question this assumption. Albert Millot, studying educational tendencies twenty years ago, saw perhaps the dangers of such an uncritical acceptance of the value of the disinterested humanitarian education: "In our schools and in our universities, we give our pupils an education which almost always will be of no use to them in later life and which will quickly be lost from their memories. It is solely in order to conform to the accepted traditions that we give pupils a classical education. The detailed study of Latin and Greek is the sign that they have received 'a gentleman's education'."[4] In this scientific, post-war world, there are still few in France who will be as forthright in their analysis.

b The Latin tradition: The assumption that the classics, and in particular Latin, are the basis of secondary education, is then still quite widespread. French education, it is claimed, has produced "that French culture which must certainly not be sacrificed but rather developed and adapted to the material, social and spiritual conditions of modern life and thought."[5] Latin has always been the basis of this education (even, in the early days of the lycées, at the expense of the mother tongue: "It is not necessary to teach what anyone can learn for himself..."[6]) and it will not now be lightly abandoned. (Its use in the orientation year of the Berthoin reform should be noted in this regard.[7]) In fact, the total number of pupils following the classics option doubled between 1948 and 1958 but, as a percentage of total numbers in secondary schools, it dropped somewhat.[8] A small élite of young intellectuals is, as a correspondent wrote to the "Cahiers Pédagogiques", the only group capable of really benefiting, capable of "assimilating overloaded programmes and thanks to contemplation of fine texts or to scientific reasoning, of disciplining themselves in a certain type of study, which is, in any case, completely individual and intellectual."[9] And the influence of this tradition is felt in other subject areas too. We might with ease trace the methods used in teaching French composition in the lycées and collèges back to the precepts of Erasmus (who applied them for the development of good style in Latin)![10]

c The hierarchy of academic subjects: As in all countries, certain subjects carry a prestige value in France.

Freeman Butts found in Australia that English, mathematics and science held universal "superiority", and the social sciences and the arts and music "inferiority".[11] There is no doubt, I feel, where the bias lies in the French hierarchy of subjects. The ablest pupil will generally follow the "classics" option, as will many of his less able fellows, pushed on by both the home and the school, until they find the effort too great. The "modern" course, with no Latin or Greek, still stresses the values of abstract study, of the academic approach to language and literature, to mathematics and science. Dewey's claim that "we cannot establish a hierarchy of values among studies"[12] would be strongly refuted by virtually all French educationists, and if, in the lycées pilotes[13], the statements of aims claim otherwise ("All disciplines being considered as means of training and education, rather than as goals to be attained, there is no hierarchy between them," says one such statement[14]), the practice in all of them is still generally in line with the traditional approach.

d The hierarchy of professions: The assumptions concerning subjects and courses are reflected in the assumptions concerning the importance and standing of the various occupations of the population (some details of which are given later[15]). It is certain that the traditional stress on the cultural aspect of education has militated against the just development of technical courses and pre-vocational training. Parents naturally seek for their children the courses carrying the greatest prestige, and, while a large section of the population has never regarded (and still does not regard) "secondary"

education as within the reach of its children, the majority are fully aware of the assumed pre-eminence of the courses which stress the linguistic skills and disinterested academic study, and which are the only way into the professions considered of highest standing in the community.

e Intelligence as the ability to acquire "culture": It is hence only a step to the assumption that intelligence is directly related to the effective acquisition of culture, culture being understood as essentially literary and classical in form. This assumption I found more or less universal amongst both teachers and pupils, frequently in the debased form that a good memory was the essential mark of superior intelligence.[16]

f Subject matter of primary importance: One cannot, I feel, escape the conclusion that many French secondary teachers (certainly a majority) - and perhaps most parents too - regard the acquisition of subject matter as of primary importance for secondary pupils. The awful mass of factual material required to be known in all the traditional subjects has not gone without criticism in France. The present curricula "constitute an indigestible, swollen, disproportioned, chopped up, and completely unassimilable mess,"[17] says Deska in a memorable passage of his critical study of the French education system. But little has been done - and nothing in the last decade or more - to lighten the load. Meanwhile the acquisition of this vast "baggage of intellectual material"[18] is regarded as proof of the educated man. The part played in

this by the agrégés, the highly qualified subject teachers[19], must not be minimised: their first interest is traditionally in their subjects, and their influence on secondary education has been great.

g The historical method: The marked antipathy of many French secondary teachers to manual or physical education and to direct vocational training is well characterised in the so-called "historical method" of teaching. "It is in the study of our rich historical past that he (the student) must seek the elements of that harmonious synthesis which will be our modern humanism,"[20] says Charles Brunold. Deska is more forthright: "Let us speak clearly: apart from the science subjects, one learns hardly anything but history: history, history of our literature, history of the literature and civilisation of foreign countries... the essential thing is to present a history course - and with the results we all know!"[21] Brunold elsewhere would have even science included: "Science teaching, if it is to acquire its full humanistic value, must seek its methods in the historical approach."[22]

h Vocational training follows secondary education: As we have seen, the assumption that vocational training is outside the scope of the lycées and collèges is very widespread. I was personally surprised to note with what vigour teachers in most schools attacked my suggestion that practical studies were being neglected. "French education does not attach enough importance to culture and traditions - which are dear to us - and they are being lost," said the head of a large boys'

school. "No matter what trade can be learnt in a few months or a few years. Modern civilisation tends too much to train technicians when machines ought to be freeing men from servile labour!"

The argument is clearly put by a group of teachers from Brittany who said: "Manual aptitudes appear fairly late, between the ages of thirteen and fifteen. The time of their appearance depends mainly on the development of character and the coming of puberty. By orienting undeveloped pupils too early towards technical education, you risk exhausting them and giving them a dislike of manual work..."[23] Technical training never begins, in any case, in French schools before the age of about thirteen. The lycée is "a factory for the manufacture of undefiled minds,"[24] not to be poluted in any way by manual labour. Roger Gal, one of the most observant of present-day French educationists, may have slight doubts: "The ideal of secondary education is a culture which is disinterested, free, independent of any professional specialisation: an attractive ideal, the value of which we know, but which has also no doubt certain deficiencies."[25] But it is only in recent years, as France prepares more actively for secondary education for all, that the leaders of French pedagogy have realised to what extent France lags in this regard in comparison with America, Russia, or even her European neighbours.

i Slow development of technical education: "Secondary education is bankrupt," wrote Texier in late 1959. "Of one hundred pupils whom it takes in in the first year only twenty or thirty become bacheliers[26]; two thirds of these continue

their studies, the rest being failures, or half-failures; they will at least have the consolation of having received a cultural education, disinterested, liberal and non-utilitarian. Technical education is bankrupt, for the nation expects from it five times as many engineers and technicians as it gets and it cannot prepare them for lack of buildings, workshops, laboratories, teachers. And yet it is the only road which will lead the country to salvation."[27]

This paragraph eloquently expresses the fears suddenly being felt by many in France as they realise how technical education has been neglected at the expense of a cultural education of uniquely high standing but unsuited to many who undertake it.

It seems to me that technical education must be developed in harmony with the existing humanistic tradition in France, and it is in that direction that reform movements seem to be leading. "Technical education is now tending to bring into effect a uniting of its general, disinterested aims and its utilitarian goals,"[28] says a recent pamphlet on these schools; and the need is urgent, as newspaper commentators continue to say. "Le technique is considered by many parents, and also by a large section of educational administration, as an education of the lowest sort, only suitable to accept the failures from the lycées and collèges."[29] The proportion of expenditure on technical education is falling: one seventh of the education budget in 1958, one eighth in 1959 and one ninth in 1960, reported Le Figaro in November 1959.[30] "France

can no longer continue with an education system which turns out one research worker, one engineer, and one teacher, when two are necessary,"[31] said the Minister. "For the next few years, we must orient towards a more technical, a more practical culture. Events demand it of us. Technical education is particularly lacking and demands a continued effort,"[32] commented Alfred Sauvy, in an analysis of France's economic growth. And "this poor nameless education" of 1843, "without statute, sanction or honour, authorised but hardly organised, abandoned under the sign of base material utility,"[33] seems now likely to get that attention which the traditional assumptions of French educationists have denied it.

2 THE VARIOUS SYLLABI

a The lycées and collèges: The courses in the lycées and collèges allow of no specific vocational training whatever, and are conceived as providing a general cultural education for six years, followed by a year of pre-university specialisation. In the first six years there are six possible courses, providing the following subjects:

Subject	Course (showing number of lessons per week in final year)					
	A	A'	B	C	M	M'
French	4	4	4	4	4	4
Latin	3	3	3	3		
Greek	4	3				
1st Modern language*	3	3	3	3	3	3

	A	A'	B	C	M	M'
2nd Language*			4		4	
History/Geography	4	4	4	4	4	4
Mathematics	1½	4	3	4	4	4
Science†	2	3	2	4½	4½	4½
Physical Ed.	2	2	2	2	2	2
Music‡	1	1	1	1	1	1
Art‡	2	2	2	2	2	2
Manual Art‡	1	1	1	1	1	1

Notes: * Modern languages taught generally are English (61%), German (21%), Spanish (12%), Italian (5%).

† Science is mainly biological until fifth year when physics and chemistry are introduced; M' retains the natural sciences in fifth and sixth years.

‡ Optional in last two years.

In the final year there are three possible options:

Subject	Course (showing number of hours)		
	Philo.	Sc.Exp.	Math.
Philosophy	9	5	3
Letters	1		
1st Mod. language	1½	1½	1½
History/Geography	4	4	4
Mathematics	1½	4	9
Physical Sciences	2	5	6
Natural Sciences	2	4	2
Physical Education	2	2	2

Notes: Philo. = Philosophy

Sc.Exp. = Experimental Sciences

Math. = Mathematics

A second language, art, music and manual arts are all optional.[34]

The syllabi for each subject are set out in detail for each year in the "Horaires et Programmes", and are sufficiently detailed to ensure virtual uniformity throughout all lycées and collèges. They reveal to what extent the aims of these subjects are considered as being cultural and, while founded on observation and experience, not intended to include vocational training of any type. They were intended in fact for classes the members of which would in all cases proceed to university education or its equivalent. That this is no longer the case is increasingly true and an increasing source of concern among many French educators.

b Aims in individual subjects: The pedagogical instructions attached to the syllabus of each subject will serve to reveal the emphasis on disinterested study and cultural growth. "Curiosity concerning these concrete problems (of economics and social conditions) must not be permitted to overshadow the indispensable aim of retaining in the teaching of literature its characteristics as a disinterested, cultural study,"[35] say the instructions concerning French. For the teaching of foreign languages, the instructions insist that "the teaching have, as its fundamental activity, the reading... of texts chosen for their moral and literary

value."[36] The mathematics course "is destined, on the one hand, to present some facts and some mathematical ideas the abstract character of which must not be allowed to cloud their practical origin, and on the other hand, to prepare for the introduction to logical forms of thinking and their use in the solution of simple problems."[37] In science, the main aim is "to teach pupils the technique of accurate observation. Pupils must acquire a sense for precision and a certain training of the judgment to permit valid comparisons and drawing of conclusions..."[38] In accord with these aims, the music course has as its object to "connect the history of music with the study of history and of literature, to show that music, like the other arts, is an expression of the feelings which varies from period to period and from country to country, and, naturally, that a general culture cannot be conceived without some simple ideas on the evolution of musical art."[39]

c Syllabi in the complementary courses: The courses for the cours complémentaires[40], despite the fact that these have been taught, in the main, by primary teachers and in classes attached to primary schools, are identical to those of the lycées and collèges, except that Latin and Greek have generally not been offered. Now that the complementary courses are to be reorganised as secondary schools[41], the full range of subjects will be offered, and the number of pupils following one of the courses detailed above will represent probably a half of the total number of twelve-year-old children.[42] The modifications to be made, if any, as a result of the raising

of the leaving age to sixteen have not yet been published.

d The technical courses: There are two groups of schools providing technical courses, catering for different types of pupil. Those which may lead to the technical baccalauréat include:

the collèges techniques (numerically the most important)

the écoles nationales professionnelles

the sections techniques (attached to some lycées and collèges) and the sections professionnelles (attached to some complementary courses)

the écoles de métiers

On the other hand, pupils from primary terminal courses often proceed to vocational training in "apprenticeship centres"[43], which are avowedly practical in their aims.

The technical section is still regarded as being for the weakest of the pupils accepted in the lycées or collèges: "It is considered," says Donald Miles, "as the least desirable of the three sections of the Second Degree because of its emphasis on the practical and utilitarian instead of in the cultural and intellectual."[44] However, the fact that there is now a technical option in the baccalauréat examination has naturally tended to raise its standing, and, as the following details show, the course retains a solid cultural core:

Year	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
French	6	4	4	3
History/Geography	3	3	3	3

Mathematics/Mechanics	5	4	4	4
Science	2	2	2	2
Modern Language	2			
Technical Drawing	1	4	4	4
Trade Work	9	19	22	23
Physical Education	2	4	4	4[45]

e The primary school leaving classes: Over forty per cent of pupils of secondary age in France, however, do not follow any of these courses. They remain at primary school until the age of fourteen, at which stage they present themselves for the Primary School Certificate (Certificat de Fin d'Etudes Primaires) and leave. Many have been the critics of this system: "The Certificat d'Etudes is a mistake and considerably handicaps a large number of country children who lose one, two, or even three years in these unhappy final classes, the programme for which has never been seriously established."[46] If the present syllabi disappear as a result of the raising of the leaving age[47], this can only benefit overall education in France.

The programmes are provided, as is the case for all primary years, in great detail, sometimes month by month, and no real choice is left at all to the teacher in what will be taught. All pupils follow the one course:

Civics	2 hours	Applied Science,	
French	6 hours	practical work, Art	6 hours
History	1½ hours	Project work	2 hours
Geography	1½ hours	Music	1 hour
Arithmetic	5 hours	Physical Education	5 hours[48]

Moreover, as is the case with other primary classes, the timetable is fixed for all schools, allowing for example that history and geography will always be taught from 1 - 1.45 p.m. four days a week, grammar will always be taught from 10.15 to 11.30 on Tuesday morning, and so on.[49]

The syllabi are in general very similar to those for the first years of the lycées and collèges. While the instructions stress the need for a practical approach, the cultural bias inherent in the planning is always apparent: "This course must not," say the Instructions, "be considered in any way as a refuge for children incapable of doing anything else. It will receive many excellent pupils who, for various reasons, do not seek a place in 'secondary' education or even in the complementary courses... General culture is the same for all children in France... If the teachers' task in these classes is partly to prepare for practical work, it must nevertheless be also and above all a work of general culture."[50]

3 VOCATIONAL TRAINING

a Its absence in most schools: It is already apparent that courses of study in lycées, collèges, complementary courses and primary schools are in no sense vocational in intent; and only in the most general way are they pre-vocational. The emphasis is constantly and, in fact, relentlessly on the need to provide a general cultural education which will be a background to any specialist training undertaken later.

b The technical collèges: It is in these schools that

the more intelligent pupil may seek a technical bias in preparation for engineering and allied work or for commercial, artistic or musical vocations. There are in fact four "streams" - industrial, economic, social, and hotel trades - each leading to a specialist certificate and, in the case of the first two, to the baccalauréat. These courses are taught also occasionally in cours complémentaires. But the total number of pupils concerned is relatively very small, at present not more than about 110,000 in all.[51] The work being done in these classes is undoubtedly of the highest standard: I visited classes in which the technical proficiency of pupils was uniformly excellent, and the final results of this training are admirable.

c Apprenticeship courses: These schools provide for pupils, aged fourteen and above, who have completed the primary school certificate. There are some 900 centres with a total of about 200,000 pupils, forty percent of them girls. Selection is often necessary because of the limited number of places available. There are courses (of three years duration) in workshop practice, technical theory, commercial subjects, home arts and general subjects, each leading to a "Certificate of Professional Aptitude".[52] It is these courses, first established in 1866, which are likely to be integrated into secondary education for all when the higher leaving age comes into operation. But before then a great work of expansion and teacher training will have to be undertaken. It is in this field that France is most seriously lacking in educational facilities.

d Rural education: "Our education system prepares the young farmer badly for farm and field life; it even sometimes takes from him all respect and taste for it, whence the desertion of the countryside from which we suffer so much in France,"[53] wrote Ehm in 1942. Only the complementary courses provide a specifically agricultural course for such young people. This course seems to me, however, well designed and realistic despite its lack of effective practical work. About one third of the syllabus is devoted to botany and zoology, agricultural science and manual work. The aim is not "to form agricultural technicians," but to train skilled rural workers while maintaining a large place for "general culture."[54] It seems to me that an extension of this type of course is most desirable, not only in rural areas but for all those pupils who do not intend to pursue academic studies to a high level.

e Provisions under the Berthoin reform: The Berthoin reform[55] provides for the extension of the complementary courses (to be called collèges d'enseignement général) in this way. "The teaching in these collèges will be extended by a year which will be devoted to... an education clearly directed towards specific preparation for the different non-technical vocations."[56] It will then be of the same length as the new shorter technical courses (which replace the apprenticeship courses), and the two are intended to provide more effectively for the less able academically, who will be at school compulsorily until the age of sixteen.

4 CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE ASSUMPTION

a Value of the cultural bias: There is no doubt, I believe, either in France or elsewhere, that the cultural aims of French education are effectively fulfilled not only in the upper classes of the "secondary" schools but throughout the education system. They are in fact one of the main characteristics of French teaching. For those rightly following academic courses and intending to go to university, to enter one of the traditional professions, it is certain that the aims are valid and the type of education given valuable.

The assumption that cultural development must be the basis for all secondary courses is, I believe, equally valid; there is no lack of support in France for this view. Cultural growth is the underlying guide for both syllabus and method, and if the content and the approach are therefore such as to preclude practical efficiency then the latter will be sacrificed. In modern languages, it seems still true, as Bouchet claimed, that "pupils lack sufficient training to be able to read foreign texts rapidly and copiously,"[57] but the seriousness with which the cultures of other countries are studied and the thoroughness of the linguistic training more than compensates, in French eyes, for this.

The avoidance of undue specialisation in any one academic field until the very end of the secondary course is an equally admirable effect of the stress upon culture. For those pupils who can grasp and handle abstract ideas in different cultural fields, the provision of a course which determinedly avoids

training scientists or humanists in separate groups is certainly to be admired. The number of such pupils seems in fact much larger in France than in Anglo-Saxon countries, no doubt because of the assumption that this is a right training for the academic child.

b Its unsuitability for many pupils: These pupils are nevertheless a minority. In a recent issue of the "Cahiers Pédagogiques", they were characterised as "this tiny élite of young people... capable of assimilating overloaded curricula and, by meditating upon fine texts or by reasoning scientifically, of engaging in specialisation, albeit completely individual and intellectual in scope..."[58] Many children who are now being offered such an education are not suited to it. Lanson could think nostalgically of the time when those who sought "secondary" education were suited to it: "Our pupils are no longer recruited as they were formerly. In the old days, the children of the upper classes came to the collège already formed by their environment. When they returned to it, they had the influence of a literary culture analogous to that of the collège, which kept them in touch with the best in life. Children of humbler station are now also sent to us, coming from families where no-one ever reads anything but the daily newspaper. These children are not amenable to literary education; it slips from the surface of their minds or passes over their heads."[59] This was written in 1903; it is a very obvious truth today.

The hierarchy of subjects[60] established by the stress on

culture in France is invalid for many secondary school pupils. The prestige attached to the humanities and to disinterested study in general, coupled with social streaming, which may lead the non-academic to the lycée or the gifted academic to the apprenticeship course, is to say the least wasteful. Donald Miles has referred to the "social hierarchy that exists within the French system of education in the form of pronounced differences in the social prestige enjoyed by the various branches and levels of instruction. Vertically the differentiation in social prestige becomes increasingly pronounced in the progression from the elementary level through the university level. Horizontally, the classical humanities claim undisputed first place, then, in rapidly descending order, the modern humanities, technical education, vocational education, and apprenticeship training, each with its own clientèle, its own objectives, and generally its own schools."[61] The assumption that this must be so is being increasingly challenged, as is evidenced in the preamble of each of the successive reform projects, but the tradition is of long standing, jealously guarded by many, and unlikely to yield easily.

The consequences of the comparative neglect of practical studies are, however, increasingly serious in France, and this aspect of the problem is gaining increasing prominence both amongst educators and with the general public. Roger Gal speaks of "the factory world, almost systematically avoided by secondary education, ignored and even feared by the pure intellectual,"[62] and adds the characteristic comment that "our fortunate, privileged classicists in the secondary schools do

not touch such sordid things..."[63] Most teachers dealing with such pupils seem prepared for a compromise: "In my opinion," one told me, "we must safeguard the cultural training and the taste for humanism which are traditional here. But I don't think that we should as a result get caught up in fetichism and sacrifice practical training and the technical side of education. As always, a middle way must be found." The President of the "Association des Ingénieurs" could still criticise, however, the "specialist" courses which "prepare more for solving intellectual exercises than for the practical utilisation of the knowledge acquired. A reform is needed in this too..."[64] "It is clearly incumbent upon education to prepare adequately," says Jean Papillon in an article in Le Figaro, "those now capable of utilising new technical forces to the maximum and of adapting themselves to technical progress,"[65] and the problem is then, as he adds elsewhere, to "dispense a cultural education more widely than in the past,"[66] while doing so.

The stress which the acquisition of this cultural education places on rote learning is discussed elsewhere[67]; it is nevertheless one of the factors mitigating against its success with many pupils. The ability to memorise does not of itself give proof of intellectual competence; this is even now, I feel, often forgotten by teachers in France.

c Neglect of vocational courses: The cultural bias has in general, then, led to a serious shortage of effective vocational training; as it is this which is the only type of

secondary schooling likely to appeal or be beneficial to the majority of adolescent youth, the proposals to raise the leaving age must involve a new approach. The need is, of course, of long standing: in 1866, Minister of Education Duruy was writing about "the preparation, not of men who make the highest speculating in science or literature their habitual study, but of industrialists, businessmen and agriculturalists."[68] But it is only now that it is realised, and that France is likely, in the face admittedly of plenty of opposition from many traditionally-educated citizens, to plan effectively for a wider provision of technical and vocational education for her youth: "We can no longer maintain a school organisation which permits us to train only one research-worker, one engineer and one teacher when two are needed, one technician when three are necessary, whilst on the other hand we have a crowd of students of the humanities for whom we have no use and who have now to have recourse to difficult and belated 'reconversions',"[69] says the commentary on the 1959 Reform Act.

d Lack of social training: Equally pressing, I believe, is the need to consider the lack of social training in the traditional secondary syllabus. Now that pupils from all environments are engaged on secondary education, the need is very apparent, and the belief that this is not the concern of the school no longer valid. The assumption is nevertheless strong in France that the task of the school is limited to the field of intellectual training. Millot, in 1938, was well aware of this: "Life demands, today more than ever," he wrote,

"that the individual be capable not only of understanding, but also of willing and acting."[70] But he was not willing to sacrifice academic quality in endeavouring to achieve such a goal. The syllabi for lycées and collèges, and equally those for complementary courses, reflect the acknowledged need and Millot's dilemma. The course in "civic and moral instruction" has been the subject of endless regulations and instructions,[71] and it is still included in the time-table (one lesson per fortnight). But effective practical training in social living is not, I believe, being tackled except in a few schools (e.g. at Marseilleveyre).

e Influence of university and the agrégation: There is, I think, little doubt that the cultural bias in French education has been maintained and supported in the main by the prestige of the university and in particular of its teacher graduates, the agrégés[72]. These men and women, trained in the highest academic tradition and tested in the fiercely competitive agrégation examination, are in general dedicated to the development of their subjects rather than their pupils, and their influence on the curriculum and the organisation of secondary education - originally in the lycées, and now increasingly in all areas of post-primary teaching - is enormous. Their lack of pedagogical training will be commented upon later.[73] Their aims run counter, I think, to the best interests of modern French education. The reformation of teacher training in France - now partly achieved - may lead both educators and the public in France to a wider view of the

teacher's rôle.

f Parental attitudes and opinions: The cultural rôle of education, and the concept of schooling as a training for examinations, is certainly accepted by a majority of French parents. The struggle to become "cultured" (by way of the baccalauréat examination) is in fact the basic aim for their children. "Need we recall what the prestige of precocity is today, how many parents are thrilled to point out that their child is 'en avance' and that he possesses a baggage of intellectual material superior to that of the majority of children of his age? With what satisfaction it is revealed that he has passed an exam before the minimum age has been reached!"[74] It is here that the force of French secondary education lies. At all costs the highly demanding curriculum in the traditional humanities and sciences must be maintained.

g Current challenge of the assumption: It would be unwise, I believe, to overstress the changed attitude of many French educators to such beliefs. Nevertheless it is clear that the assumptions are being challenged increasingly, and that a new spirit of experiment and a wider understanding of the tasks of education are developing. It is to be hoped that this more enlightened approach will gradually cause a shift of emphasis in what is certainly one of the most firmly fixed of all the assumptions underlying French secondary education.

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2 Vial, F., Trois Siècles d'Histoire de l'Enseignement

Secondaire, (Paris, Delagrave, 1936), p. 213.

3 Deska, N., Un Gâchis qui Défie les Réformes, (Paris, Editions du Scorpion: Collection Alternance, 1956), p. 40.

4 Millot, A., Les Grandes Tendances de la Pédagogie Contemporaine, (Paris, Félix Alcan, 1938), p. 117.

5 Gal, R., Histoire de l'Education, (Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1948), p. 116.

6 quoted from the regulations of 1802 (Loi Foureroy) by Vial, F., op. cit., p. 172.

7 see sections E3a,b.

8 cf. Informations Statistiques, (Paris, Institut Pédagogique National), January 1959, p. 34. In 1948, 46.3% of "secondary" pupils followed a course with Latin, in 1958, 42.6%. This 42.6% represents about 11% of the age group in all kinds of state secondary school.

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10 cf. Miles, D.W., Recent Reforms in French Secondary Education, (New York, Teachers' College, Columbia University, 1953), p. 9.

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14 Report prepared at the Lycée de Sèvres and titled "Journées d'Etudes Consacrées aux Techniques d'Observation de l'Enfant," 23 October 1959, p. 3.

15 see section J1d.

16 see section D1g.

17 Deska, N., op. cit., p. 115.

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19 cf sections F1, G3c and J1a.

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26 cf section H2d.

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28 Panorama de l'Enseignement Technique, (Paris, Imprimerie Nationale, 1958), p. 3.

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32 Sauvy, A., La Montée des Jeunes, (Paris, Colmann-Lévy, 1959), p. 178.

33 quoted by Vial, F., op. cit., p. 204.

34 for details, reference should be made to Horaires et Programmes de l'Enseignement du Second Degré, (21st ed., Paris, Vuibert, 1958), pp. 4-8.

35 ib., p. 19.

36 ib., p. 78.

37 ib., p. 86.

38 ib., p. 141.

39 ib., p. 161.

40 for details, see section E2a.

41 see section E3b.

42 see section E2b.

43 details are given in sections 3b and 3c of this chapter.

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47 see sections A5g and E3c.

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50 ib., pp. 23-6.

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52 ib., p. 10 et seq.

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54 Programmes, Instructions et Répartitions, op. cit., p. 605.

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56 La Prolongation de la Scolarité Obligatoire et la Réforme de l'Enseignement Public, (Paris, Institut Pédagogique National, 1959), p. 16.

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59 Lanson, G., in Buisson, F., and Farrington, F. (ed.), French Educational Ideals of Today, (London, Harrap, 1920), p. 296. The passage was written originally in 1903.

60 see section D1c.

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69 La Prolongation de la Scolarité Obligatoire et la Réforme de l'Enseignement Public, op. cit., p. 8.

70 Millot, A., op. cit., p. 17.

71 cf. Horaires et Programmes de l'Enseignement du Second Degré, op. cit., pp. 28-42.

72 see section G2.

73 see section G4.

74 Millot, A., op. cit., p. 74.

E THE SELECTIVE SYSTEM

1 ANALYSIS OF THE ASSUMPTION

a Extent to which there remains an assumption: "It is indispensable to go on repeating endlessly that the first task of education is to make a choice."[1] "It is a basic error to unite all children in the same school just at the age when habits are being permanently fixed."[2] These two comments reflect the traditional assumption of the French educationist - who is not, of course, alone in this - that selection is a basic feature of secondary education. The teachers in the lycées and collèges are equally emphatic: in reply to the question "Should one permit all pupils to study under the same teachers and in the same schools?" the teachers said: "No, secondary education has value only if it is addressed to pupils of a certain level; a basic intellectual selection is essential"; and "It is essential that a selection take place based on value and intelligence and not on social position"; and "We have enough 'dead weights' (in the present "secondary" schools) who brake the teacher's progress, without considering increasing their number."

The assumption is a natural result of the historical development of secondary education. It is linked closely with the concept of social class. The assumption that secondary education is for the few - namely those whose parents can afford it - was

basic to the type of schooling given in the lycées and collèges. Only in the period 1930-33, in fact, did secondary education become free of fees in France. We can be sure therefore that, as much as if not more than elsewhere in Europe, selection is a basic idea in the minds of most teachers and parents in France.

b Basis of the assumption: The educational assumption is then that only some pupils can benefit from secondary education. Here it is necessary to recall the meaning of the word "secondary" in the mind of the French teacher.[3] The lycées and collèges are not intended to be for all children; those who are not able to enter them must be content with a completion of primary education. "The secondary schools are invaded," says one headmaster, "by too many pupils incapable of benefiting from them." Hence some form of selection must be made, and we shall see that the question of adequate selection is a live one in France as elsewhere. However, it must be born in mind that the tradition of social selection is a long-standing one: the children of the manual worker are unlikely to enter the lycée just as those of the professional man are unlikely to be content with the Certificate of Primary Studies. And if the cost of educating the former is three times less than that of the latter[4], the argument for selection is only reinforced.

At the same time, a widening awareness of the benefits, from the practical viewpoint, of possessing higher education qualifications (in particular, the baccalauréat) has led more and more parents to enter their children for the academic

lycée-collège course. The numbers in such schools have more than doubled since the Second World War, from under 300,000 to 600,000[5], and the system, as the preamble to the 1959 Reform Act says, "is weakening and threatening to succumb under the load."[6]

c Intelligence testing: The procedure for admission to "secondary" schools has until recently been based on an examination in language and arithmetic lasting in all one and a quarter hours. The type of intelligence test pioneered in France, and still widely used in Great Britain for example, is not considered necessary except in particular cases. The psychology service does provide efficient and effective testing in these special cases, and the results are available to schools. But it seems that the assumption has been that a test in the basic subjects is an adequate indication of the aptitude of the eleven-year-old child for academic education.

d Gradual growth of assumption of secondary education for all: There is every evidence that opportunities for secondary education for all adolescents are being rapidly increased. The growing importance of the complementary courses (to become collèges d'enseignement général) and the similarity of courses in the various types of secondary school are evidence of this. "It is essential that our pupils be subjected for as long as possible to types of education as little different from each other as possible,"[7] says the 1959 Act, which underlines the "pedagogical, social and psychological disadvantages" of segregation[8]. There are already

teachers in the conservative lycées who would permit "all pupils, gifted or not, to study in the same schools with the same teachers." The extent to which the type of common course (leading to a choice between classical and modern humanities) at present offered to all "secondary" pupils will be unsuitable when the leaving age is raised and all children leave primary education for post-primary work at the age of eleven has perhaps not been fully realised, but the ideal of orientation courses, long experimented with, and now introduced[9], is certainly a good one and likely to succeed. Its development in the classes nouvelles is most admirable. "It has given to the teaching in our lycées and collèges," claimed Charles Brunold, "a new spirit and individuality which are recognised today throughout the world and which have inspired the work of pedagogical renovation..."[10] It seems certain that the old assumptions concerning the need for selection are soon to be undermined and swept away by a new ideal of comprehensive secondary education.

2 TYPES AND METHODS

a Types of secondary school: Mention has already been made frequently of the various types of secondary schools in France. It will suffice briefly to summarise these here:

i the lycée: established by the state, this is the traditional grammar school dispensing an academic education;

ii the collège: established by the local commune in conjunction with the state, it now offers courses

identical with those of the lycée; there are also some sixty collèges nationaux;

iii the technical collège: this offers the technical course leading to the baccalauréat, and is controlled by the technical education authorities;

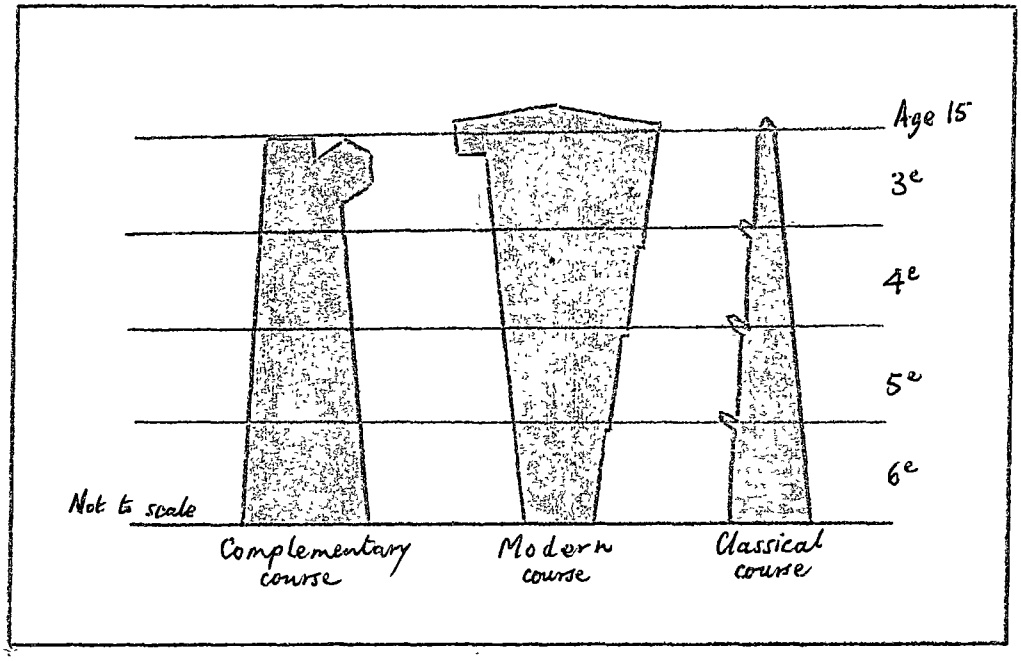
iv the complementary course: this is identical with the first four years of the collège course (generally, however, those sections including Latin are not offered), except that it is controlled by the primary education authorities;

v the terminal classes: these are technically the last two years of primary schooling (after the examination for entry to lycée, collège or complementary course), and may lead to apprenticeship courses.

b Distribution and importance of each: The following table gives a picture of the distribution of pupils between the ages of eleven and eighteen in these various schools[11]:

Age	Primary	Compl. Course	Lycée-Collège	Tech.	Total
11-12	438	37	82	1	558
12-13	356	60	94	5	515
13-14	318	54	78	12	462
14-15	78	69	76	113	336
15-16	14	56	74	110	254
16-17	5	32	66	99	202
17-18	2	12	47	48	109
18+	2	4	46	20	72
(Figures in thousands)					

Within the traditional secondary schools (the 338 lycées and 524 collèges[12]), there is a division between classical and modern courses (with and without Latin) which shows the attraction of the latter as the pupils progress through the schools. "L'Agrégation", the teachers' magazine, shows this diagrammatically:[13]



As a percentage, the distribution between modern and classical was as follows in 1958[14]:

	6e	5e	4e	3e	2e	1ère
Class.	51	47	43	39	32	34
Mod.	49	53	57	61	68	66

(Figures are percentages)

It is clear too that the proportion of pupils taking the classical course has dropped gradually in the last ten years

(and in fact for a considerably longer period). In the terminal classes, the philosophy option now attracts only about thirty-five per cent of pupils, compared with fifty per cent in 1947-8.[15]

c Entry to "secondary" education: The entry examination for lycées, collèges and complementary courses, the details of which follow, will be modified as the 1959 reforms are put into full operation. At present this examination is a one and a quarter hour test, taken only by pupils whose primary school results are below the average and those transferring from private schools. It consists of:

i an eighty-word dictation;

ii a language test based on a text which has first been read to candidates; and

iii an arithmetic test including both basic calculation and a series of problems of increasing difficulty.

A committee of inspectors, teachers and lay representatives is responsible for the selection, based on this examination, of those pupils who will be admitted in addition to those whose primary school record is above the average.[16]

d Parental choice: It is for the parents to decide whether their child is to enter lycée or collège, complementary course or technical collège, if he or she is accepted for "secondary" education. "Too often," said an article in "Le Figaro" in March 1960, "the choice is determined by the distance separating the home from the nearest educational institution, or by family tradition, or by the fear of entering

a child - however brilliant he may be - in a long course which will prove a financial hardship to parents."[17] It is certain that this choice is still frequently guided by the social position and the cultural tradition of the family, even though the proportion of children from working-class families entering such courses is increasing slowly.

e Methods of transfer: Transfer from one type of secondary school to another is normally effected by examination, and occurs most frequently at the end of the fourth year in the complementary course when pupils there desire to continue in a lycée or collège to the baccalauréat examination. Official figures indicate that somewhere in the vicinity of sixty percent of pupils in this course transfer either to a lycée/collège or to technical education (in all, some 22,815 students were transferred in 1957-8 of a total of 32,042)[18]. The programme of studies gives in detail the examinations to be taken for admission in each year, and specifies that pupils failing any such examination are not automatically accepted into a lower class. Transfer is also made from lycée, collège or complementary course to technical collège, generally at the end of the second year. "Le technique is considered by many parents, and also by a large percentage of educational administrators, as a final resort, just good enough to accept the "failures" from the lycées and collèges," claims Jean Papillon.[19] The fact remains that many more desire to transfer than can be accommodated, and pupils are accepted on the basis of their previous record.

f The pupil "dossier": One of the most impressive features of the selection procedure, and of pupil transfer, is the use made of the pupil "dossier". Developed in the lycées pilotes, these records are full and informative. Before the pupil reaches "secondary" school, a detailed character analysis, provided partly by the parents, is prepared, in addition to the formal entry form. The pupil profile (attitudes and character), his study record, psychology tests and observations, and his own analysis of his personal interests, are kept constantly up to date by teachers in the lycées pilotes, and it seems both desirable and likely that similar detailed records will be kept in the proposed orientation classes, envisaged in the 1959 Reform Act.

g Social distribution in each type of school: It is undeniable that the secondary schools of France reflect the social strata of the population, and that the hierarchy of the schools is both understood and accepted by the vast majority of people. Reliable figures to show the differences are not readily available, but the following tables will give sufficient indication of the tendencies:

Percentage of children from various social groups entering "secondary" schools and complementary courses:			
agricultural workers	13	civil servants	47
farmers	18	industrialists	67
industrial workers	21	managerial	81
trades and business	37	liberal professions	86[20]
employees	43		

Socio-economic origins of pupils in lycées/collèges and technical schools (as a percentage of total number of pupils):		
	lycées/ collèges	technical schools
professional	9	2
administrative, civil service	40	34
employees, farmers and other workers	48	58
not determined	3	6[21]

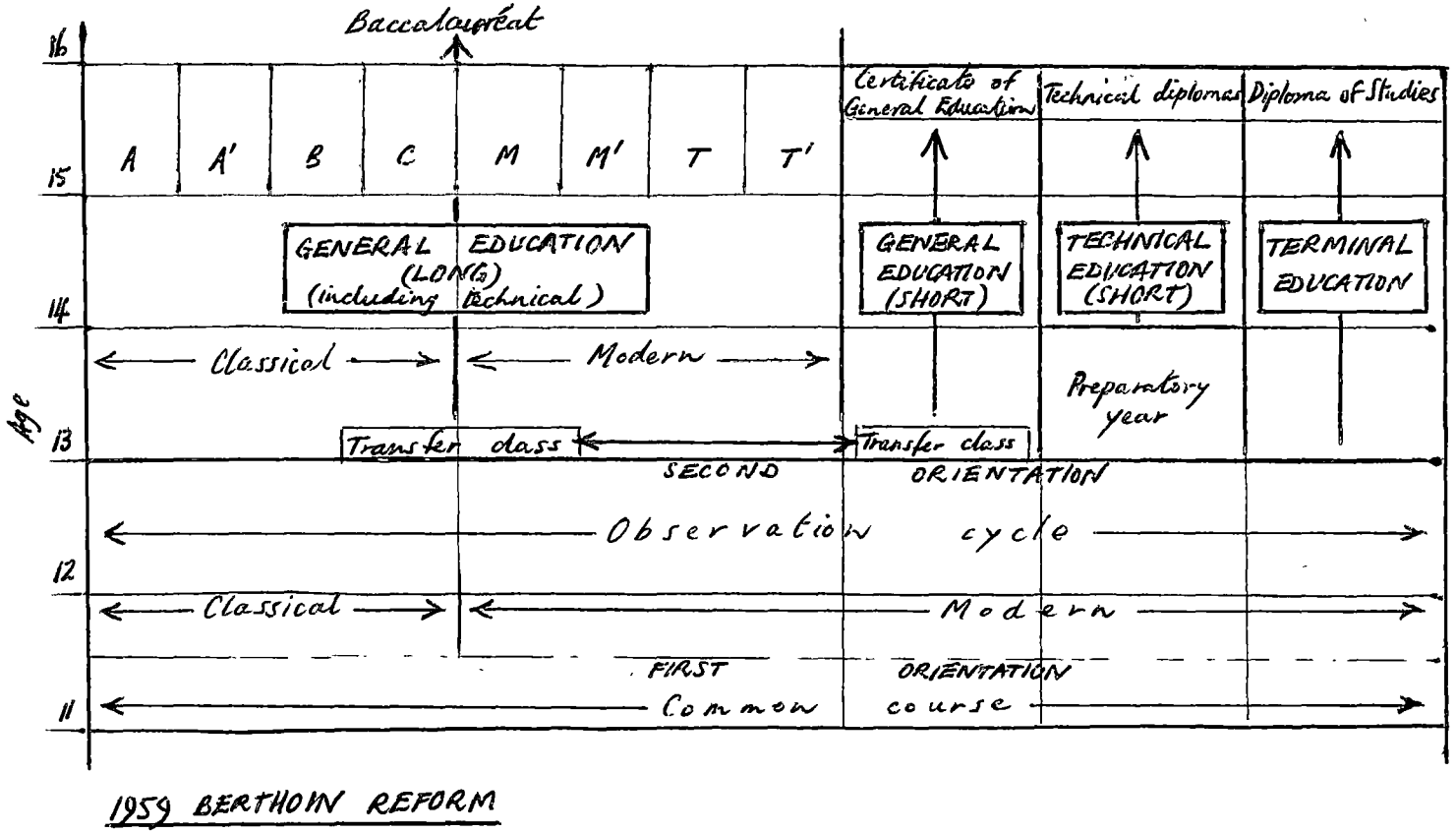
According to figures prepared in 1956, only about eight percent of the children of working-class parents entered lycées or collèges[22], and it seems clear, as a report in the journal "Population" claims, that the percentage has shown no tendency to rise in the last fifteen years[23].

3 REFORM OF SELECTION PROCEDURE

a The observation and orientation cycle: Reform is at present confined to those pupils whose parents seek entry to lycées, collèges or complementary courses for them. The deeper problem of providing secondary schooling for all is still to be tackled. Within this narrower field, however, effective progress is being made in France.

Under the 1959 reform, which includes a sixteen-year leaving age, the organisation of secondary education is envisaged approximately as shown in the diagram on the next page.[24]

For the moment, however, only the orientation and observation cycle for those pupils choosing to follow the



1959 BERTHOIN REFORM

general education courses (formerly lycées, collèges and complementary courses) is in effective operation. Even this has led to immediate difficulties, mainly through "the very marked rise in the number of pupils in first-year classes"[25] commented upon in the National Pedagogic Institute's report on teacher recruitment. The press has not hesitated to criticise the scheme. "There can be no effective 'observation cycle' until a sufficient number and effective decentralisation of first-year classes has been effected, nor until the methods for co-ordinating the work of teachers in the various sections (primary, secondary, technical) have been fixed,... nor until it is known how the programmes of work in the three sections will be standardised..."[26] "Inspectors will have the task of persuading parents to allow their children to enter the 'long' course... It will be necessary to overcome prejudices, give information about financial assistance; it will be necessary to build more and more 'junior schools', bringing secondary education near to those who need it..."[27] "It is to be feared that at the end of this (the first) term, the transfers from one school to another justified by 'observation' of the pupils, will be very difficult, probably following the traditional hierarchy, 'good' to the lycée, 'less good' to the complementary course, and 'still less good' to the technical schools..."[28] "It must be asked how effective and objective 'observation' can be achieved in classes of more than forty pupils..."[29] Such comments, which have been widespread since the commencement of the reform, reflect the timidity of many Frenchmen in the face

of proposed changes in national institutions; there seems no real reason, however, why the reform should not operate effectively as the first difficulties are acknowledged and overcome.

b Adaptation of present schools: The first moves have concerned the adaptation of the present schools, so that more school buildings than before now house embryo secondary sections. The institution of a classical stream in the complementary courses (until now offering only the modern option) has made possible the use of these sections as equivalents of lycées and collèges from and to which transfers can be made at the end of the second year of the cycle.

c Courses for non-academic pupils: For the moment, there has been no change in the arrangements for those pupils who either do not wish to enter a "secondary" school or who are judged incapable of benefiting from it. These latter, says the preamble to the Reform Act, "can obviously only remain in the primary classes until the basic skills have been acquired or else... without passing through the 'observation cycle' enter directly into the terminal education[30] course."[31] This course will be "clearly biased towards a specific preparation for various non-technical occupations"[32]; it is not yet in operation.

d The experimental multilateral schools: The lycées pilotes, details of which are given elsewhere[33], point the way in which the reform can most effectively be put into practice. These are multilateral schools, providing all forms of post-primary education in the one school (except, in most cases,

for those mentioned in section (c) above), and practising orientation with the aid of frequent staff meetings and the preparation of detailed pupil records. Their opponents have been numerous; their contribution to the reform is nevertheless obvious, and their model will continue, I believe, to serve, as the necessary changes in structural organisation are made.

4 CO-EDUCATION

a Strength of the assumption of separate schools: The traditional assumption of separation of the sexes in the larger schools seems hardly to be challenged in France. The prospect of co-education was viewed with horror by virtually all teachers with whom I talked. "Personally, I find it better (to separate boys and girls) like that... It is very difficult for a teacher to have a well-disciplined mixed class..." "We must not, we absolutely must not, mix them at the level of secondary classes!..." "God made boys and girls different, physically and morally. It is right for men to teach boys, and women girls. The confronting of the two sexes should take place only at the time fixed by nature, that is at the end of secondary schooling." And so on. Ehm even claimed that "co-education is contrary to nature, having for effect the making of a man effeminate and causing a woman to lose the principal characteristics of her sex."[34] When girls first began to seek secondary education in large numbers, it was decreed that separate schools should be provided as soon as the enrolment of girls in any school exceeded fifty, and this regulation is still in force.[35] There exist, of

course, considerable numbers of co-educational secondary schools (about 260 out of a total of 886 lycées and collèges in the public system, for example[36]), but this is a matter of expediency in the main. The assumption in these schools is generally that segregation is desirable, at least in upper classes, and the larger schools (lycées pilotes excepted) seem generally not to be co-educational.

b Effects of the reforms on co-education: It is likely that co-education will become more widespread as more and smaller secondary schools or sections are established under the 1959 reform. It will obviously be impracticable to provide two separate schools for orientation courses in rural areas. It will be a long time, however, before it is accepted as desirable by most French educators.

c The future of co-education in France: The development of co-education in the secondary schools will depend on its effectiveness in the experimental schools and in the newer secondary "observation" classes. The social advantages - as well as the economic soundness of one larger school rather than two small ones - will be the grounds upon which change would be made. The severely competitive academic background of education and the relative neglect of social or moral development may well mean, in the long run, that the status quo will persist. It is assumed too, I think, that boys deserve more attention than girls - the relatively poorer staffing of girls' lycées and collèges is indicative of that[37] - and that girls would hinder the boys' achieving the highest academic and cultural levels.

Freeman Butts' remark that "as Australia is predominantly a man's culture, so is Australian education predominantly designed to meet the needs of boys more fully than those of girls,"[38] may well apply equally to France, despite its fiercely egalitarian outlook in political matters. While such arguments may seem unreal or trifling, they reflect a basic assumption, and I see little real prospect of change in the present French cultural and educational environment.

5 CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE ASSUMPTION

a World-wide moves against selection: France is clearly following world-wide trends against segregation of pupils at the secondary level. The Minister, M. Boulloche, spoke in 1959 of his "intention of favouring the 'democratisation' of education and of suppressing the 'barriers' separating the different forms of secondary schooling."[39] There is a realisation that pupils are in many cases not following the courses best suited to them: "The whole drama is there: we retain in theoretical education many young minds who would find their way better at one level or another of technical education, and at the same time we abandon in the useful but superficial education of the terminal primary classes intellects capable of handling the long 'secondary' or technical courses."[40] Donald Miles has commented that "the experience of separate schools, each with its own particular mission, does not contribute to the principle of according equal dignity to all forms of labour."[41] This concept is, however, relatively recent in Europe, only the communist countries and Britain claiming at present to provide separate and equal

secondary opportunities for all pupils.[42] That France now looks forward to the creation of a similar state of affairs is one of the most encouraging features of her post-war educational development.

b The strength of the social class system: However, the strength of the traditional opposition to equal opportunity is still great and will not be easily overcome. "In a free society," said H.Raymond King, "institutions like schools cannot be manipulated into a pattern that conflicts with social realities, and even though the social realities have outgrown traditional social attitudes, the latter in their obsolescence still tend to govern parental choice of schools."[43] The traditional social attitudes to schools in France have already been outlined; they are changing only slowly under the pressure of the needs of modern society. "Certainly, a great number of pupils encumbering lycées and collèges today should be simply expelled and replaced by worthwhile students from other social milieux,"[44] wrote F.G. Dreyfus in the journal of the conservative agrégés. And Miles claimed that, "for those in the lycées and collèges classiques, the acquisition of a secondary education is a matter of social prestige, of which the baccalauréat is the symbol par excellence."[45] Recruitment for the lycées is still mainly made, as one young teacher in Marseilles said, "on the basis of social criteria." It is nevertheless true that educators, and more specially those in administrative and quasi-political positions, tend to gloss over these facts, claiming that in fact equal educational opportunity is being given to all. A forthright

political policy of social promotion seems to me essential if headway is to be made. There are no encouraging signs that such a move is imminent. "The basic influence of family environment belongs to those truths which are dismissed from the mind, the newspaper columns, political speeches, reform projects and so on. Why? The conservatives do not like to admit their privileged position; the liberals refuse to recognise the failure of their principles and methods, based for half a century on equal opportunity. The latter is completely insufficient, and until now has benefited the middle classes at the expense of the working classes."[46] Alfred Sauvy sums up well, I think, the basic problem of lack of real equality and indicates the difficulties facing those planning for the establishment of really comprehensive secondary education in France.

c The effects of the reforms: The reforms will nevertheless have their effect in certain directions. School administration will inevitably be reformed also so that pupils following identical courses (e.g. in complementary courses, at present under the control of the Director of Primary Schools, and in lycées, under the Director of Secondary Schools) will be all under the one authority. M. Guy Caplat, director of the Bureau of Organisation and Methods in the National Education Department, frankly affirms that "... the accumulation of contradictory structures will one day make the transformation necessary. The directors of the various sections (primary, secondary, technical) cannot indefinitely pursue their 'insular' lives..."[47]

The effect on country areas, notably backward and

conservative, limited at present in their educational opportunities, is likely to be marked. The creation of new complementary courses, a movement which has been growing rapidly in recent years, will need to be accelerated to provide opportunity for all to participate in the "observation and orientation cycle". Inevitably the process will be governed by teacher shortage[48] (qualified teachers will not willingly go to isolated rural areas) and lack of buildings, but a beginning is already being made.

Vocational training is likely to become both more efficient and more widespread also, as the present apprenticeship courses are more securely linked with the secondary school. At present, of course, the provision of suitable buildings and equipment is hopelessly inadequate. In 1960, over 5,000 candidates were refused places in apprenticeship courses in the department of Seine alone, and 50,000 for the whole of France, because of this shortage.[49] But integration of technical and academic secondary studies under the reform must slowly lead to a more effective provision for pupils seeking or suited for this type of education.

The reform must, I think, result eventually in a form of "streaming" at the age of about thirteen (those pupils destined for the classical course in the lycée having been previously separated from their fellows after one term, at age eleven and a half). Many educationists in France already doubt whether transfers from one school to another will in fact be made at this stage; the act provides for "adaptation classes" for pupils who transfer both at this stage and also at the end of the first term of first year, and the latter is apparently functioning

satisfactorily at least in some areas.

The opposition to the reforms will come mainly from the lycées, the agrégés teaching in them, and parents brought up in them. The academic standards and the social standing of the lycée must not be endangered. "Literary exercises and the industrial arts should not be forced to live under the one roof."[50] M. Marchais, president of the Société des Agrégés, in an audience with the Minister in 1959, stated: "Education must be varied according to the aptitudes of the pupils and the needs of the country, and this should be done at the youngest age at which it is possible to assess the talents of children. The choice should be made as soon as the ability to reason can be measured, namely at about age eleven; therefore we are opposed to formulae which seek to delay this classification until the age of thirteen or fifteen."[51] In other words, the agrégés want to preserve the lycée (and the collège) as a school for selected pupils right from the start. If the reform is to succeed, on the other hand, the traditional separation at the end of primary school (as we have seen, largely social in nature) must be replaced by a period of two years spent in any one of the available secondary schools before this choice is made.

d Future development: The reform is, I believe, basically sound, though only a first step towards ultimate secondary schooling for all; the administration is obviously concerned to see that it succeeds in the end. The move towards real equality of opportunity, as social barriers are lowered, will come only gradually, no doubt. In 1902, the right of the pupil (and the

parent) to choose the studies which suited him or her best had already been defined: "The fault of our present courses is that they place at the disposal of parents only two or three types of education... They are not permitted to combine various sections from these courses, to take what suits one particular child and leave what is useless or beyond his capabilities..."[52] This "democratisation of education"[53], loudly proclaimed by the politicians, is still far from reality in most areas of France.

Even when (and if) such equality has been largely achieved, there remains much to be done in providing effectively for the large number of pupils now entering secondary education for the first time. These pupils will rarely have developed effective study habits - and the present courses will do little to assist - nor will it be possible to assume that the home has provided adequately for the social and civic development now so patently avoided except in theory.

Great efforts are being made to improve and extend technical and pre-vocational training and it is in this direction that better integrated and more adaptable curricula will develop. The question of curricula is of course bound up with the selection problem: there are, I believe, signs that both will undergo much modification in France as a result of the present mood of educational unease and desire for reform.

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1 Deska, N., Un Gâchis qui Défie les Réformes, (Paris, Editions du Scorpion: Collection Alternance, 1956), p. 80.

2 Ehm, A., Education et Culture - Problèmes Actuels, (Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1942), p. 71.

3 see section A3.

4 Details are to be found, for example, in: Institut National de la Statistique et des Etablissements Economiques, Coût et Développement de l'Enseignement en France, (Paris, Imprimerie Nationale, 1958), p. 58. In 1958, cost per pupil who had completed primary education was 3154NF, cost per pupil who had completed secondary education was 10,309NF.

5 Le Recrutement des Professeurs du Second Degré, (Paris, Institut Pédagogique National, 1959), p. 5.

6 La Prolongation de la Scolarité Obligatoire de la Réforme de l'Enseignement Public, (Paris, Institut Pédagogique National, 1959), p. 7.

7 ib., p. 8.

8 ib., p. 15.

9 see section E3a.

10 Brunold, C., "Orientation Pédagogique de l'Enseignement du Second Degré," Bulletin Officiel, 30 May 1952.

11 Coût et Développement de l'Enseignement en France, op. cit., p. 92. The figures are for 1954-5, but the relative proportions have not changed materially.

12 Liste des Etablissements du Second Degré, (Paris, Institut National Pédagogique, 1959).

13 L'Agrégation, No. 87, January-February 1959, p. 209.

14 ib., p. 230. Figures supplied by the Bureau Universitaire de Statistique.

15 Informations Statistiques, (Paris, Institut Pédagogique National), January 1959, p. 37.

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17 Papillon, J., "Les Parents à l'Heure du Choix", Le Figaro, 8 March 1960.

18 Informations Statistiques, op. cit., February 1959, pp. 116, 124.

19 Papillon, J., "Accroître les Possibilités d'Accueil du Technique", Le Figaro, 13 September 1960. Cf. section D4b.

20 Projet de Loi portant Prolongation de la Scolarité Obligatoire et Réforme de l'Enseignement Public, (Paris, S.E.V.P.E.N., 1956), p. 3. The figures are for 1955.

21 adapted from figures in "Origines Sociales des Elèves des Enseignements Secondaires et Techniques", Population, 1955, pp. 562-3. In this table, technical schools include technical collèges and apprenticeship centres.

22 Projet de Loi portant Prolongation de la Scolarité Obligatoire et Réforme de l'Enseignement Public, op. cit, p. 3.

23 Population, op. cit., p. 563.

24 L'Agrégation, No. 88, March 1959, p. 273. Some adaptation has been made to ensure easier comprehension.

25 Le Recrutement des Professeurs du Second Degré, op. cit., p. 4.

26 Papillon, J., "La Clé de Voûte", Le Figaro, 23 February 1960.

27 Papillon, J., "Une 'Unité Dispersée' par Canton", Le Figaro, 15 March 1960.

28 Papillon, J., "L'Essai du Cycle d'Observation", Le Figaro,

10 May 1960.

29 Papillon, J., "Le Cycle d'Observation: Clé de Voûte - Mais qu'est la Voûte?" Le Figaro, 17 May 1960.

30 see diagram in section E3a.

31 La Prolongation de la Scolarité Obligatoire et la Réforme de l'Enseignement Public, op. cit., p. 9.

32 ib., p. 16.

33 see section F4.

34 Ehm, A., op. cit., p. 216.

35 cf. Meyer, A.E., Development of Education in the Twentieth Century, (New York, Prentice-Hall, 1949), p. 218.

36 Informations Statistiques, op. cit., January 1959, p. 50.

37 see section G2g.

38 Butts, R.F., Assumptions Underlying Australian Education, (Melbourne, A.C.E.R., 1955), p. 34.

39 "Education Nationale - un Huitième du Budget", Le Figaro, 23 November 1959.

40 La Prolongation de la Scolarité Obligatoire et la Réforme de l'Enseignement Public, op. cit., p. 8.

41 Miles, D.W., Recent Reforms in French Secondary Education, (New York, Teachers' College, Columbia University, 1953), p. 60.

42 cf. Kerr, A., Schools of Europe, (London, Bowes and Bowes, 1960), p. 12.

43 King, H.R., "The Changing Face of English Education", in Inside the Comprehensive School, (London, Schoolmaster Publishing Co., 1958).

44 Dreyfus, F.G., L'Agrégation, No. 92, August-September 1959, p. 18.

45 Miles, D.W., op. cit., p. 22.

46 Sauvy, A., La Montée des Jeunes, (Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1959), p. 174.

47 Papillon, J., "La Classe de Sixième - Cassure ou Transition", Le Figaro, 24 May 1960.

48 see section J3c.

49 Le Figaro, 13 September 1960, 22 November 1960, 28 February 1961.

50 Compayré, Histoire de la Pédagogie, (Paris, Libraire Classique, 1915), p. 90.

51 reported in L'Agrégation, No. 89, April 1959, p. 259.

52 Ribot's "Introduction Générale au Rapport sur l'Etat de l'Enseignement Secondaire", quoted by Vial, F., Trois Siècles d'Histoire de l'Enseignement Secondaire, (Paris, Delagrave, 1936), pp. 250-1.

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F IMPERSONAL INSTRUCTION

1 BASIS OF THE ASSUMPTION

a The teacher as presenter of material: Assumptions concerning the rôle of the classroom teacher in France are common to all West European countries, and are based on the historical development of teaching from the university level downwards. In many ways, the lycée or collège professeur in France resembles his colleagues (frequently no more highly qualified academically) teaching in the universities. It is assumed that his essential task is to present the material of his programme to his pupils as clearly and as accurately as possible. "The acquisition of knowledge and the training of the mind are prime requisites of French education and take precedence over all other considerations."[1] The teacher's place is therefore at his desk before his class from where he dispenses knowledge to them with little care whether it is being absorbed or not. Roger Gal, in common with many modern educators in France, is most critical. He speaks of "... the weaknesses of teacher-dominated learning, given ex cathedra, in which it is always the master who acts first," and adds: "It is difficult to interest the majority of pupils by this method which takes from curiosity and individual initiative their real

value."[2] Ehm, in his discussion of education and culture, likewise claimed that the various subjects are "taught in a completely dogmatic, ex cathedra manner."[3] "It is scandalous," says the inimitable Deska, "that classrooms should become university courses."[4] Yet my observations in all but the pilot lycées and some of the better complementary courses only confirm this analysis of the typical teacher's attitude to his work.

A word should be added, however, about the excellence of the text-books now in use.[5] They reflect the reforms in method advocated by the central authorities and encourage a wider understanding of the teacher's task; in the hands of willing and able pupils, they must make up for a great deal of unimaginative and dogmatic teaching.

b The teacher as examiner: It is assumed that one of the teacher's essential jobs is to act as examiner and as classifier of the pupils assigned to him. While there is, I think, less formal examining during the school course than is normal in Anglo-Saxon countries, there is nevertheless a constant allocating of marks which are recorded (and presented regularly to parents) and which are used to decide on promotion from class to class. The formal lesson (laid down in detail in the instructions for several of the subjects) normally begins with the oral interrogation of one or more pupils, at the end of which a mark is recorded. Again this is an aspect of the teacher's work which is criticised by modern educators in France. The report on a conference to discuss observation techniques

included the comment: "The teacher must be an animator rather than a judge. It is in teaching, not in allocating marks, that the teacher is most effective."[6] Personally, I would conceive examining as one of the teacher's legitimate rôles, one not over-stressed in French schools, and one the assumptions for which are valid.

c The teacher as interpreter: The teacher reveals, the pupils rarely discover in French secondary schools. This notion, presented by a critical teacher in a collège in Bordeaux, is, I think, valid for the majority of classes I observed. The very typical exercise of lecture expliquée as a method of teaching literature is fairly typical in its minute dissection by the teacher of a fragment of prose or verse. The good teacher will of course involve the class in this, but the discoveries they make will be those required by the teacher for the development of his thesis. It is, in fact, assumed that it is the teacher's task to interpret literary text, scientific phenomenon or social fact to the pupils, who in their turn will note and commit to memory.

d The teacher and discipline: There are, on the other hand, certain aspects of school life, which are not felt to be part of the teacher's work. The first of these is (as we shall see[7]) that of school discipline. This is the task of the administrative, not the teaching, staff, it is assumed, and it is to the surveillant général, his deputies or their equivalent, that difficulties of discipline are referred. Discipline during lessons, within the classroom, varies greatly of course,

dependent upon the personality of the teacher; most teachers with whom I discussed the question dismissed it as not relevant to their work.

e The teacher and social and physical development: These, likewise, are not generally considered as primarily the teacher's responsibility. For the latter there are physical education specialists, not employed by the education department, and looked down upon in general by secondary school teachers.[8] The former is felt to be the responsibility of the home, not of the school, and certainly not of the class-room teacher. This is a much criticised aspect of the French secondary schools, but one deeply rooted in tradition. "Our traditional education has too much sacrificed the formation of character and good sense."[9] "Cut off from real life, he (the professeur) has despised the physical development of the body, neglected the moral development of the personality, and stunted the aesthetic development of the senses."[10]

The official counter to this neglect by the secondary schools has been forceful but perhaps misguided. The physical education curriculum has been revised and the amount of time allotted to it increased (to two periods of gymnastic work and three of organised open-air activities per week). The subject may be counted as part of the baccalauréat and some other examinations, with compulsory tests in athletics and gymnastics. Social development, citizenship, civics is included in the curriculum both as a separate subject[11] and also as a development of the French and history courses; it seems to be

neglected except on the theoretical, academic level. "When formal lessons on citizenship are not allied with activities such as those carried out in the classes nouvelles they are not likely to be effective."[12] My own observations only confirm those of Miss Wykes.

f The school as a social unit: The school is not therefore normally organised as a social unit: this is not part of the teacher's task at all. Little effective provision is made for the school to meet together, for out-of-school activities to take place, or for pupils to participate in the organisation or running of the school.[13] Not many French teachers or parents would visualise it otherwise. Mlle Paulette Dubuisson and M. Ortigues were being revolutionary when they claimed that "a certain number of the difficulties of adaptation (of pupils to secondary school life) would disappear if the children found well-lit buildings, with games areas and sports fields and recreation rooms where they could read, listen to records, etc. A true social life could be established more easily, based on the common quest for positive values..."[14]

g The teacher and the individual child: In such circumstances it is not surprising if most secondary school teachers know little of their pupils. It is assumed very commonly, I think, that psychology and child-study are no part of a teacher's needs. In this matter the pilot classes and schools have made and are making a big contribution to reform. Ehm's comment is still fairly accurate however: "He (the professeur) sees only the purely objective side of teaching,

that is the knowledge, and he knows nothing of the subjects who must assimilate this knowledge and who seem to be merely a number of copies of the one type of average intelligence."[15] Deska looks at it from the bewildered pupil's point of view: "Each of his teachers comes to class, drowns the pupils for an hour under a torrent of truths, and leaves, without knowing his 'clientèle', without concerning himself about their cares, their problems, their individual dramas."[16] The school is a place merely for getting information; the pupils come and get it more or less well; what happens apart from that is no concern of the teacher.

h The teacher and the parent: "The school is not the family, and vice versa...," writes Georges Mauco; "parents should not seek to intervene directly in the life of the school."[17] This attitude is tacitly assumed by the vast majority of French parents; those who do interfere are generally out to cause trouble and to undermine the school's authority. An uneasy truce is kept with Parents' Associations, the members of which generally assume that the curriculum, methods and regulations of the school are none of their business. Only in some of the lycées pilotes are there periodic teacher-parent consultations (at Sèvres, for example, they are held once a term[18]). The parents will nevertheless support wholeheartedly the efforts of the school to ensure high standards of scholarship, for this is part of the tradition of cultural excellence in France. Asked at a meeting of the Federation of Parents' Associations, sixty percent of those present said

that they supervised school work done during holiday time by their children.[19] The basic assumption is in fact, as Mr Vernon Mallinson recently claimed, "that the parent and not the state is responsible for education,"[20] and that the state merely provides an institution to ensure that the academic training required by the parents for their children is provided.

i The teacher's independence in the school: In general, it is assumed that the teacher is required at the school only during the time that he is taking lessons. His secretarial duties, apart from those involved in recording marks and participating in the preparation of pupil records, are minimal. He feels himself to be independent of the school's routine except as it affects his own timetable. This attitude is so normal as to be very difficult to combat. "The teacher, having been left to his own devices for so long," says Miles, "has developed a distrust of anything that encroaches on his independence."[21] His relationship to the school is a purely impersonal one.

j The teacher's university background: Undoubtedly the fact that virtually all teachers in the "secondary" schools (though not those in the primary or complementary courses) are university graduates, and that the agrégés at least (who are most influential) have little experience of or interest in pedagogical training, is the explanation of this impersonal approach. Parents assume that a man with university training is superior as an educator; his background inevitably leads to a perpetuation of the traditional rôle of the teacher.

k The tradition of specialisation: Undoubtedly the

professeur in lycée or collège is a highly qualified specialist. His interest in his subject is real and deep; within his field he is almost invariably both very learned and very enthusiastic. In this respect, he is certainly more efficient than his equivalent in most other countries (even than those of most other West European nations). The "insatiable hunger for their specialty"[22] is, I think, the main mark of the agrégés, and the attitude is often shared by their less highly qualified colleagues. "We will agree, I think, that the vocational aspect of education has been, for the majority of us, less important than our love for the subject which we teach...,"[23] confesses R. Bazin in his analysis of the methods of teaching French. The tradition of abstract scholarship is strong, and specially in the lycées; it is somewhat less strong in the collèges, and considerably less elsewhere, but it is still for the majority of parents the most important characteristic of the teacher.

2 CLASS-ROOM TECHNIQUES

a Predominance of lecture methods: It will be clear that many of the most highly qualified teachers in France's secondary schools pay scant attention to the theories of learning, and prefer to maintain the methods used by their own teachers. Naturally, the Minister's remark, in 1951, that "many teachers in our lycées and collèges have got further and further away from dogmatic, teacher-dominated procedures,"[24] is a reflection of the growing interest in method, but it applies at present to only a restricted segment of the teaching force. For the majority, the teacher's technique is restricted to a three-fold

operation - clear presentation of the subject matter as outlined in the syllabus (and in this he may be quite "modern" in his approach, using visual and aural aids effectively), careful attention to its assimilation by his pupils, and regular testing of the material presented. Great stress is placed on memorisation and the amount required of pupils, is, I think, one of the less desirable adjuncts of the lecture-dominated procedure. While one must not deny the value of memory training, nor decry the cultural and sometimes practical values of a certain amount of well-memorised material, it is certain that the secondary system in France tends to turn the pupil into a mere memoriser and to reward highly the one who best remembers the material in his text-book. In view of the importance of the lecture, it is not surprising that the student's note-book is of vital importance nor that the note-books are generally of superior quality, well-organised and thorough. The ability to make notes is, in fact, one of the desirable features of education which comes from the constant reliance on the lecture. It is of course assumed that the pupil will know how to do this without instruction: I saw no evidence of more than superficial help on the part of the teacher. The excellence, however, of the text-books in use[25] does mean that a first-class model of how notes should be made is before the student.

b <u>The official methodology</u>: There has certainly been no lack over the years of defined official methodology; this is one of the natural adjuncts of a centralised system of course-planning.[26] In 1952, the Director-General of Secondary Education of the time, Charles Brunold, analysed methods in secondary

education under three headings - dogmatism, research and historical development - and thought that the second was "the one which must characterise our secondary education most clearly."[27] The circular containing these remarks was the basis for a not inconsiderable quantity of more specific methodology for individual subjects poured forth by the inspectors responsible. One might mention specially in this regard the work of Obré and Campan in the field of natural science.[28] A careful reading of this series of articles shows to what extent the aim is to combat the traditional dogmatic approach to the syllabus: "We must therefore resolve not to have the natural sciences learnt by heart. We must make up our minds that they will be understood, so that they may be an instrument of culture..."[29] Roger was obviously similarly pre-occupied in his advice to teachers of English: "The teacher will refrain from remaining seated throughout the lesson, will move round the desks to check the assiduity and attention of the pupils and to check their note-b ooks... A lesson which degenerates into a boring monologue is a failure."[30] Such writers are aware of the need for advice and critical of the traditional and still widespread approach. While so many of the teachers in lycées and collèges lack elementary training in effective techniques - "Teaching is doubtless the only trade," said Bouchet, "from which an apprenticeship in the techniques is omitted"[31] - such official encouragement is obviously needed. Trained teachers should, of course, be aware of the main methods in their subjects and able to adapt these to the age- and ability-levels of their pupils.

c School libraries: facilities and use: The lamentable lack of school library facilities in virtually all French secondary schools is a reflection of the dogmatic teaching methods. In the Paris area, which one would expect to be at least as adequately provided for as country areas, I found very few school libraries indeed containing more than a few hundred volumes. "... Neither teacher nor pupils have a single serious book available in some establishments. There exist at present in the library of a lycée less interesting books than one would find in the officers' quarters of a cruiser!"[32] claims Deska; my observations in most schools confirm his view. The exceptions are all the more welcome, even though the best of them would not be highly regarded in many other countries. The experimental school at Sèvres provides three separate libraries for lower, middle and upper classes, totalling some 5,000 volumes for 2,000 pupils. They are however well arranged and in the experimental set-up put to good use.[33] The opulent Lycée Jannson-de-Sailly in the wealthiest area of Paris has a well-arranged library also, though only for its junior pupils, and with only some 1,700 volumes in all. The best-run library I saw was at the Lycée Jean de la Fontaine, where pupils get instruction in the use of a library and where the Dewey classification is in use. In contrast are the vast majority of schools, providing generally only a small professional library for the use of teachers only. It is obvious that effective individual study and group learning cannot be accomplished without adequate library facilities. It cannot be assumed that there are sufficient books at home - in fact France fared badly

in this regard in a recent survey by the "Saturday Evening Post" magazine: the average number of books in the French schoolchild's home was shown to be twenty-five compared with fifty in the U.S.A. and fifty-five in England.[34] This is, I believe, one direction in which reform is urgently needed in French education.

3 EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

a Maximum teaching loads: Compared with his fellows in other West European countries, the French secondary school teacher does not have a heavy class load.[35] The agrégé, in particular, does not exceed about fifteen lessons of fifty minutes each per week. Moreover, the administrative responsibilities of the class-room teacher are not great.[36] There would seem to be ample opportunities for the teacher to develop within the school a following for his own special extra-curricular interests and thus broaden pupils' educational outlooks and activities. This is, however, certainly rarely the case in French secondary schools.

b Successful activities: The lycées pilotes[37] often provide examples of excellent extra-curricular groups, but other schools are much less well catered for, I think. The widespread interest in film clubs is one notable exception. I saw several excellently run film societies, operating out of school hours and catering for a critical audience prepared to study and comment upon the films shown. The extra impetus provided by those assistants who take lessons in oral language and come from foreign countries (mainly England and Germany) is also often marked, and the language clubs run by them provide an extra

incentive for those pupils interested. In the same way, the wide participation in educational visits and exchanges, and especially the linking of schools in France with those in other countries, is often most successful.

c Lack of practical activities: The assumption, however, that the secondary school has no need to provide for leisure-time interests and hobbies or for practical activities is well-nigh universal. Both teachers and parents would oppose such provision in many areas, and if, in the lycées pilotes, manual trades are stressed, especially in junior classes, it is certainly against the combined resistance of a majority of parents and pupils. The teacher in fact assumes that his task is limited to giving instruction in his own specialty, and it is this assumption which underlies the methods used and the activities engaged in in the schools.

d Lack of communal activities: One further feature (and result of the same assumption in part) needs to be pointed out; the lack of communal assemblies and combined activities is immediately apparent throughout the schools. The annual prize-giving day or evening forms the one exception in most places. Most schools have no assembly hall capable of holding all pupils; few schools have more than a token gathering together of pupils once a week - and this is frequently lacking. The effect on social attitudes has already been stressed[38]; the one-sided development of so many Frenchmen is an obvious result of the lack of stress on the importance of communal participation in school life.

4 THE CLASSES NOUVELLES EXPERIMENT[39]

a Historical survey: There is every indication that an increasing number of teachers and educational administrators in France feel the need for reform in both the content and method of teaching in secondary schools. They have had to battle hard and for a long period to make progress. The classes nouvelles, established in 1945, and aimed at preparing for the reform of French secondary education, were based on the "orientation classes" which had been established by Jean Zay in 1938. The first-year classes were started in October 1945 and by 1949 the experiment was being assessed in preparation for its repetition from 1949 to 1952. In fact, the principles developed were applied, in theory, in all first- and second-year classes at that time. The classes nouvelles having been abolished officially in 1952, two series of classes pilotes were set up as laboratoires pédagogiques in each academic region.[40] Finally, six experimental schools were organised, four in the Greater Paris area, one in Marseilles and one in Toulouse.

b The present "lycées pilotes": Brunold defined a lycée pilote as "an establishment which, thanks to the co-operation of all the personnel who form a homogeneous team, functions as a permanent laboratory for the application of more 'active' methods, available for the pedagogical training of secondary school teachers."[41] The schools are generally well equipped and modern - especially in the case of Marseilles and Toulouse - with generous staffing and special privileges of various sorts. They are all co-educational. They provide in several cases for

technical and commercial training as well as for entry to the university and higher schools. One can have only admiration for the thoroughness and effectiveness with which they have been established; the generality of French secondary schools being as limited in aim and facilities as they are, the lycées pilotes stand out most impressively within the state education system.

c The main humanising aims: The aims of these schools are clearly and briefly stated in their own prospectuses, and are effectively practised, I believe. The implicit assumptions behind these aims, concerning the shortcomings of French education, are most interesting, reflecting as they do the subject-dominated approach to education of the traditional French lycées and collèges.

The first aim is to provide opportunity for a detailed knowledge of each child, so that "orientation" can be accurately carried out. The basis for this task is the detailed dossier scolaire. The summary of aims of the Lycée de Sèvres lists the following as its main contents:

i information supplied by the family;

ii an analysis of the aptitudes and behaviour patterns of the pupil;

iii the terminal observations of each teacher;

iv psychological test results;

v graphs of scholastic results.[42]

The summary hardly does justice to the detail contained in the dossiers which I was able to study at this school. This type of detailed record-book has now been incorporated in the Observation Cycle under the Berthoin reform[43], and will be in use at least in first- and second-year classes in all schools. Its use in the

orientation of each pupil towards the course suiting him best is immensely valuable.

Secondly, there is an attempt to achieve a close co-ordination between the various subjects of the syllabus (and hence between teachers). This seems to me to be artificially contrived in many ways, but it is certain that in some cases it is effective. Its value in bringing the teachers in each school together to discuss courses is important; the spirit of co-operation between the various subject departments is one of the observable features of these schools.

A further development which has now spread to all schools (since the Berthoin reform bill) is the provision of directed study groups in which "activity methods" are practised. It is here that the teachers are able to observe their pupils' methods of study and to give individual assistance. Groups do not exceed about fifteen to twenty in number (generally half-classes), and both group and individual work are encompassed. These lessons, says a report on the lycées pilotes, "are the ideal experimental field for the discovery of those criteria which will decide the orientation... of the pupils."[44]

Associated with this is the stress laid on manual arts in the first years, the aim here being to discover talent which might otherwise be unobserved, and to enable the proper orientation of pupils possessing special manual skills.

Finally, there is the conscious effort to promote a more favourable atmosphere in the classroom through the stress on

self-discipline and positive appreciation of pupils' efforts. While this is no doubt characteristic of the best teachers in any school, its encouragement and development in the lycées pilotes is the basis for most of the superior work done there.

d Similarities and contrasts with traditional methods: This reform movement is in fact an attempt to challenge the basic assumptions concerning the rôle of the teacher in education. It has moreover had its own followers, particularly it seems in Latin America. The similarities with traditional methods are many: the primary importance of well-organised subject-matter, the training of memory, the skill in making notes, the comparative lack of social training. But the contrasts are also marked, and it is in the gradual changes in method and approach being achieved through this pioneering work that hope for continued growth in French secondary education may be found.

5 CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE ASSUMPTIONS

a The teacher's purpose: The assumptions concerning the teacher's rôle in the school inherent in the analysis above, while undoubtedly the natural outcome of the historical development of higher education in France, are, I believe, one of the most serious barriers to the development of effective secondary education in that country. That many Frenchmen believe this to be so also is evident, I think, from the growth and spread of the ideals of the classes nouvelles. There is certainly an urgent need for the teacher's purpose to be redefined, for his scope to be broadened, for his approach to his task to be lifted

above that of a distributor of information. A report presented at a study session at the Sèvres International Pedagogical Centre in 1959 says: "Every teacher must have as global a knowledge as possible of each of his pupils: the balanced development of each child is obtained only at this price."[45] It is in this regard - the detailed study of the individual pupil - that French secondary education in the traditional schools seems to me most deficient. That there is every sign that new methods of teacher training and a more urgent propaganda from the experimental schools are breaking down the former prejudices of the university-educated professeurs is extremely encouraging. It is to be hoped that the end result will be a teaching body dedicated to the development of children rather than to the presentation of arid knowledge.

b Lecture methods and memorisation: The frequency of critical comments in French educational literature only confirms my own observations of the prevalence and the inadequacy of lecture methods and uncritical memory work. Talhoust claimed that "whole generations have been transformed into 'brain-store-houses'," [46] and Ehm criticised the general ignorance of modern methods: "More concerned to establish curricula than to formulate a method, more inclined to state laws than to show how laws are discovered... we have, by making ceaseless call on his memory without caring whether his initiative and intelligence are called into play, compromised the intellectual activity of the youth we were called upon to direct and instruct... Interested only in the result, we have remained in ignorance of the procedures by

which it is attained."[47] "For there exist," added Bouchet in his study of the individual in education, "despite certain prejudices, good methods of teaching which cannot be reduced to simple individual recipes, but which obtain results with pupils, almost no matter who the teacher is who puts them into practice; a good method is an instrument, a tool, which must permit any willing pupil to achieve almost unaided his maximum level... it is the pupil who, thanks to the method with which he has been provided, becomes almost the sole organiser of his work. Now these methods are neither known nor practised by the members of the teaching body."[48]

The simplicity of the demand for rote learning is no doubt the main reason for the stress placed on it. Not, of course, that it is bad in itself. But Millot's pre-war comment is, I think, still valid. "The most important rôle (in the school)," he said, "is played by the memory, and in particular by verbal memorisation. The big thing is to retain and be able to repeat what has been read in books or said - and repeated - by the teacher."[49] Such teaching can too easily lead to a concept of the learned man as merely one who "can recite thirty well-chosen lines of French poetry, as much of Latin, and who can state three or four facts on each of twenty or twenty-five subjects which 'one ought to know about'."[50] Obviously French education rises a very great deal higher than this at its best, but the assumption is dangerous, I feel, that it is by lecturing and ensuring memorisation that effective teaching takes place.

c Importance of oral interrogation: One of the least

attractive features of the classroom situation in many French secondary schools is, in my view, the importance attached to oral interrogation. This almost standard beginning to the lesson normally leads to an assessment of the pupil's worth by the teacher which is recorded and may be decisive in the matter of promotion. The tendency to indulge in an unfair cross-examination is certainly often not resisted. Bouchet is again critical: "The teacher monologue is hardly broken except for oral testing in which interrogator and interrogated seem very often to be playing at cat and mouse. It is a matter for the pupil, not of showing that he has thought, or of obtaining an explanation of what has not been made clear, of seeing in the teacher a benevolent collaborator - but of avoiding a bad mark by bits of memorised work, tricks and frauds..."[51] Undoubtedly the picture is here painted too black, but the basic weakness is there. The assumption that a pupil can and shall be assessed in this way is, I think, false. Most French teachers would deny that too much importance is attached to oral work in class - despite the fact that very little writing except for rapid note-taking seems to be done there - and the examination system relegates it to a minor place[52], yet the same teachers are quite prepared to accept the traditional pupil interrogation as the way to begin a lesson.

d <u>Teacher-pupil relationships:</u> The assumptions that the individual child matters little and that his social and physical development are in any case outside the scope of a teacher's work are not in my view valid. The French child of course expects only that his teacher will instil and test knowledge according

to a nationally laid-down syllabus. His aim in going to school is inevitably connected only - or nearly so - with the successful passing of examinations: in this process the teacher is an effective guide. But, as Miles wrote, "The child is still very far from being at the centre of the French education system."[53] The teacher-dominated techniques relying on lecturing and oral recall take little account of the interests or capacities of the pupil. Increasingly, as the persentage of children undertaking secondary schooling grows, and as the social background of these becomes more and more varied, these techniques are showing themselves to be inadequate.

e Absence of group techniques, research methods: It is clear that group work and pupil research at present still play little part in French secondary education. The experimental schools and the official instructions nevertheless attach great importance to this aspect of school life, and the lycées pilotes carry out effective work in this way. Their influence seems to be slowly impregnating the rest of the schools. The "organisation of collective effort"[54] is assumed by many teachers to be a waste of time and a denial of basic educational precepts. Gal speaks of the way in which the traditional system "appeals only to egoistic work - each for himself - in which the pupil thinks of the rest of the class only as rivals who must be overtaken or passed in class-lists, examinations and competitions."[55] Such practices fail to provide the pupil with a proper understanding of the goals of education, and in fact probably are both a cause and a reflection of the existing state of social consciousness

among the French people. "They (i.e. the pupils) are in no way taught to work, and the work which is imposed on them - arousing no interest in them - makes their life boring and monotonous: homework hastily done, lessons badly learnt, cheating and copying are the melancholy consequences, destroying all sense of initiative in the child."[56] This failure to instil effective study methods is of course not peculiar to France, and in fact it has been less serious there in the past than elsewhere, the influence of the cultured home being as strong as it is, but the present secondary pupil even in France can no longer be assumed to have such a background. It is to be hoped that the methods implicit in the travaux dirigés in the pilot schools and elsewhere will lead gradually to a new approach to classroom techniques.

f. Difficulties in adopting "classes nouvelles" techniques: Already in 1952, Brunold, then Director General of Secondary Education, was urging that "the spirit of the 'classes nouvelles', their methods, the desire for research and progress animating them, must be made progressively to penetrate the whole of our secondary education."[57] There is still some way to go, both in practical matters and in removing the traditional barriers to change. In the practical field, a real problem is that of class size. While it is still true in the country that a quarter or more of first-year classes have less than twenty-five pupils, so that "a large proportion of our teachers find themselves in a position which permits them vigorously to pursue the aims already realised in the classes nouvelles,"[58] there is, as in most countries at present, a growing shortage of teachers and a

consequent increase in the size of classes. The keeping of detailed dossiers in such circumstances will be very difficult, demanding more time than most teachers will be prepared to give, whether paid or not. The simplification of the forms to be used is no real solution, for the essence of the scheme is the discussion by his teachers of each individual pupil. The lack of pedagogical knowledge, and the unwillingness of so many teachers to adapt time-honoured methods, is an equally serious threat to the scheme, and one which can only gradually be overcome by a re-education of teachers and by more effective training (both now in part being achieved). Also vital is the re-education of parents. Parental opposition seems quite likely to any change in the traditions of lycées and collèges, and, as Mauco says, "the excesses of certain parents or parents' associations can effectively upset the work of the teacher or the headmaster, and can even adversely affect the authority and discipline of the teacher."[59] The present antagonism between parents' associations and the centralised administration has already been noted[60]; while contacts between parents and the individual school are often friendly and co-operative, a great deal depends on the approach of the teachers as well as on a more intensive publicity on the part of the ministry.

g The principle of experimental schools: The idea of "permanent pedagogical laboratories"[61], as developed in France, seems to me most worthwhile. Limited in number but fully developed, well-equipped and excellently staffed, they have served as the birth-place of much of the new thinking in post-war French secondary education. If it has taken fourteen years finally to

see some effective legislative action as a result of their endeavours, the teachers in these schools nevertheless feel that their work has been of immense value.

Now, I believe, it is time for these schools to look forward to new experiment in different fields. Little has been done to reform the upper sections of the secondary schools, little has been achieved in the field of social service, little has been done to develop library services. The facilities are there for such work, and the hope is that its growth will be increasingly rapid in the next decade.

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5 see also section B3c.

6 from the duplicated report headed "Journées consacrées aux techniques d'observation de l'enfant", (Sèvres, 1959), p. 2.

7 see section I2d.

8 see section B2d.

9 Rivaud, A., in the preface to Ehm, A., op. cit., p. ii.

10 Hubert, R., Histoire de la Pédagogie, (Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1949), p. 172.

11 Moves to increase its timetable allocation from a half hour to one hour per week have recently failed, cf. "Pas de changement pour l'enseignement de l'instruction civique", Le Figaro, 10 October 1959.

12 Wykes, O., "The Crisis in French Education", in Melbourne Studies in Education 1957-58, (Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1958), p. 100.

13 see section F3.

14 Berge, A., (ed.), Bon ou Mauvais Elève, (Paris, Editions Sociales Françaises, 1957), p. 133.

15 Ehm, A., op. cit., p. 31.

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18 For details, see Classes Nouvelles, Classes Pilotes, a pamphlet, (Paris, Centre International d'Etudes Pédagogiques de Sèvres, 1957), p. 4.

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24 Brunold, C., "L'Education - Problèmes et Perspectives", Cahiers Pédagogiques, 10 November 1951, p. 103.

25 cf. section B3c.

26 see sections B3b,d,f.

27 Brunold, C., "Les Méthodes de l'Enseignement du Second Degré", circular dated 6 October 1952, in L'Enseignement du Second Degré, (Paris, Musée Pédagogique, 1956), p. 16.

28 Obré, A., and Campan, F., L'Enseignement des Sciences Naturelles, (Paris, Institut Pédagogique National, 1956),

29 ib., p. 34.

30 Roger, G., Conseils Pratiques pour l'Enseignement de l'Anglais, (Paris, Institut Pédagogique National, undated), p. 4.

31 Bouchet, H., L'Individualisation de l'Enseignement, (2nd ed., Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1948), p. vi.

32 Deska, N., op. cit., p. 187.

33 see section F4.

34 Gallup, G., and Hill, E., "Is European Education Better than Ours?" Saturday Evening Post, 31 December 1960, p. 72.

35 see section J3a.

36 see section I1b,c.

37 see section F4.

38 see section F1e.

39 This topic has been dealt with in detail by Miles, D.W., op. cit.

40 Classes Nouvelles, Classes Pilotes, op. cit., p. 2.

41 quoted in a pamphlet distributed to visitors to the experimental secondary school at Sèvres.

42 Classes Nouvelles, Classes Pilotes, op. cit., p. 5.

43 see section E3a.

44 from the duplicated report, "Journées Consacrées aux Techniques d'Observation de l'Enfant", op. cit., p. 2.

45 ib., p. 3.

46 Talhouet, Le Paradoxe de la Connaissance, II, p. 57, quoted by Ehm, A., op. cit., p. 32.

47 Ehm, A., op. cit., p. 31.

48 Bouchet, H., op. cit., p. 14.

49 Millot, A., Les Grandes Tendances de la Pédagogie Contemporaine, (Paris, Félix Alcan, 1938), p. 102.

50 Deska, N., op. cit., p. 54.

51 Bouchet, H., op. cit., p. 9.

52 see sections H1e and H4d.

53 Miles, D.W., op. cit., p. 47.

54 Hubert, R., op. cit., p. 172.

55 Gal, R., op. cit., p. 133.

56 Ehm, A., op. cit., p. 29.

57 Brunold, C., "Orientation Pédagogique de l'Enseignement du Second Degré", Bulletin Officiel, 30 May 1952.

58 ib.

59 Berge, A., op. cit., p. 72.

60 see section B6a.

61 Brunold, C., op. cit.

G PEDAGOGICAL TRAINING

1 BASIS OF THE ASSUMPTION

a The teacher and culture: The assumption already considered, that the teacher's essential task is to hand on the French cultural heritage, underlies the traditional attitude to teacher training. The most highly qualified academically of France's teachers are only incidentally her best teachers. Many of them have had virtually no training in their art; few have even an elementary knowledge of educational psychology. "There are very many teachers," says Deska, "who have never officially been present at any lessons other than those they take themselves."[1] Bouchet adds: "The education of our teachers is in fact based on the assumption that every candidate for a position possesses an innate competence to teach the subjects he himself has studied... Secondary education is undoubtedly the only (calling) which does not concern itself with this, placing all the emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge by the future teacher, and neglecting entirely the means for communicating it."[2] The reason is simply that it is assumed that no specific training is necessary for any well-educated person in order to be able to teach effectively. The procedures adopted in various class-rooms which I was invited to visit show to what extent the assumption is invalid.

b A long academic training essential: While specific teacher

training is considered unimportant, it is assumed that no teacher is fitted for his work unless he has achieved high academic standards. It is in this respect that he so frequently leaves his colleagues in other West European countries far behind him; one cannot but be impressed with the generally high level of learning of secondary school agrégés, and confess that their contact with willing learners must be fruitful. It is no doubt correct for the majority of such teachers to say, as one of them wrote recently, that the vocation of teaching has been less important for them than the love of the subject that they teach.[3]

It must be noted too that teachers in complementary courses and primary upper classes are often much better equipped pedagogically than their fellows in the lycées and collèges, the former having generally passed through a teachers' college (normal school).

The natural assumption is that the teacher must be a subject specialist, in senior posts often a specialist in one aspect or level of his subject, and that his cultural background will be passed on to his pupils merely by his contact with them. Those who have given consideration to this matter may well agree with a young teacher who commented: "Some agrégés wonder whether the place of the agrégé is not particularly in the upper classes preparing for university entrance, excluding, say, the classes in the first cycle... Yet I believe," he added, "that to be able to dominate one's subject from above is useful even in beginners' classes." The more usual attitude, however, is expressed by the teacher who quoted the old proverb: "C'est en forgeant qu'on

devient forgeron" (roughly, we learn to do by doing).

c Training in method unimportant: The almost universal attitude of those with whom I discussed this question was that, while some training may be useful, it was neither essential nor even in every case desirable. French education has "by tradition seen fit disdainfully to ignore theoretical pedagogy."[4] "The mass of French teachers," claimed Bouchet, "have never, during their professional training, heard of child psychology or of the most effective teaching methods."[5] Yet, as Millot observed, "people possessed of a natural skill in teaching are much rarer than is thought, even among professional educators."[6] Millot, however, in common with most of his fellow educators, believed that "the others will remain mediocre or incapable despite all the courses in methodology and all the teaching seminars."[7]

It is none the less true that the realisation that effective teaching techniques can be taught is now spreading in France. The classes nouvelles have contributed. So has the need to plan for large numbers of teachers who will not have achieved the rank of agrégé (at least the equivalent of our M.A.). The course for the C.A.P.E.S., the certificate gained by these latter, includes a full year of specific teacher preparation. "It must be recognised," says Deska, "that the C.A.P.E.S. constitutes a serious and praiseworthy effort to improve teaching at the expense of erudition."[8] Yet the assumption still persists that the higher one's academic ability is, the less one needs preparation for effective teaching.

d The less academic the teacher, the more training he needs:

Conversely, as I have said, the secondary teacher in the complementary courses or in primary classes is generally much better trained for his work. He is not regarded as a subject specialist; he will generally be responsible for at least two or three subject areas with the one class. His training will have been done in a "normal school", where his academic studies will have been limited in the main to a deeper understanding of the secondary school syllabus. He is not admired by the majority of French parents and certainly not by his colleagues in lycée or collège. It is assumed that he is a poorer teacher than they. Now that the "few pedagogical tricks which one might acquire", of which one headmaster spoke, are being provided for some of the middle group of secondary teachers, the Capésiens[9], however, there is hope that the whole teaching profession will eventually receive effective preliminary training.

2 AGRÉGATION AND C.A.P.E.S.

a Pre-requisites: Of the 26,000 teachers in lycées and collèges in 1958, about 6,500 were agrégés.[10] But almost the entire teaching body in these schools possessed the equivalent of a first university degree. All had completed successfully the baccalauréat examination at the end of seven years of secondary studies. On the other hand, in the secondary classes attached to primary education, while the large majority possessed the baccalauréat, relatively few had completed a university degree: they had, however, had specialist teacher training in a "normal school". For both groups successful completion of the secondary

school course is the normal pre-requisite.

b Licence d'enseignement: Although the first university degree (the licence) in teaching (with the possibility of options corresponding to each of the major disciplines) is completed by four or five thousand candidates each year, only sixty percent of them eventually enter teaching.[11] The degree may be obtained either through the universities or while attending the écoles normales supérieures or the pedagogical institutes mentioned below.[12] Some students come into teaching also after having completed a non-teaching degree as preparation for the agrégation.

c Diplôme d'études supérieures: For those students intending to attempt the agrégation, further, post-graduate, work leading after three years' research to the diplôme d'études supérieures in their subject is necessary. This means normally that a total of five or six years' university study is the necessary prelude to the competitive agrégation examination.

d The agrégation: This is prepared either in the universities or in the écoles normales supérieures, of which there are five, all in or near Paris. The examination is both theoretical and practical, the latter section consisting of a number of lessons taught to different classes and assessed by the examiners. A period of four weeks' observation in selected schools precedes this practical test: this is the only teacher training as such the agrégé receives apart from occasional lectures by inspectors attached to the Department of "Secondary" Education. Because of the strict limitation of the number of

positions available each year in the schools, the percentage of failures is traditionally high; for example, in one recent year twenty-eight of 182 candidates in English were successful, nine of 165 in Geography, fourteen of 248 in Philosophy, and so on.[13]

e Regional pedagogic centres: The establishment of these centres, of which there are eighteen altogether, in 1952 led to a worthwhile development of the C.A.P.E.S. and C.A.P.E.T. (Certificat d'Aptitude au Professorat de l'Enseignement Secondaire - or Technique). Such a scheme operated previously in less favourable circumstances to staff the smaller collèges, but the enormous growth of secondary education has led to its becoming the major form of teacher training. Candidates for the C.A.P.E.S. or the C.A.P.E.T. must possess the licence d'enseignement and then complete a year's specialist teacher education in one of the regional centres. At the same time they are required to begin preparation for the agrégation. They are able at this time to engage in considerable observation and practice teaching.[14] Nonetheless, the emphasis still seems to be on the specialist subject rather than on purely educational matters: "The practice period for C.A.P.E.S. or agrégation gives the future teacher the possibility of making contact with the realities of the classroom and to receive the advice of an experienced teacher. Its value cannot be denied. No one however would maintain that these periods give an effective psycho-pedagogical formation...,"[15] wrote Gilles Ferry in 1959. Only the more humble primary-school teacher, nurtured in the "normal

schools", seems in fact adequately prepared pedagogically for the task of teaching in the secondary schools of France!

f Academic standing of agrégé and "capésien": While the long tradition of the agrégation and the fierceness of the competition to gain the title ensure that it is more highly regarded than perhaps any other degree offered by French universities, it must be remembered that the holder of the C.A.P.E.S. is also highly qualified academically, and may in some ways be better equipped for secondary teaching than the agrégé. This undoubtedly high academic standard of the teachers in lycées and collèges (and the correspondingly much less exalted status of the primary teacher) has had a definite influence on both aims and methods in the secondary schools. And the natural desire of educated parents to have their children taught by such men and women can be appreciated.

g Distribution of teachers: This being so, it is important to see how the agrégés are distributed in the schools. Firstly, it is to be noted that while sixty percent of men in lycées are agrégés, only forty percent of women have this title; and the reverse is true of those who hold the certificat.[16] The magazine of the agrégés draws the inevitable conclusions (on the assumption that the agrégé is the better teacher): "1: from the point of view of the pupils, girls receive an education inferior in quality to that received by boys; and 2: from the point of view of teachers, inferior positions tend to be offered to women."[17] Of the total of teachers in lycées and collèges, about twenty-eight percent are agrégés, the percentages being as follows for the various subjects:

Spanish	23	Mathematics	27
German	25	History/Geography	30
English	25	Physical Science	33
French	25	Philosophy	34
Natural Science	26	Italian	34[18]

It seems that this proportion will be about maintained for the present, the 1960 Budget providing for example for the addition of 900 new agrégés and 2,000 holders of the certificat to the state teaching service.[19] The total number of qualified teachers must at the same time increase rapidly, of course, to provide for the increasing school population and this may well lead in the long run to a more rapid decrease in the percentage of agrégés.

3 CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE ASSUMPTION

a Its invalidity: Of all the assumptions that appear to underlie French secondary education, that concerning the unimportance of pedagogical training seems to me the most pernicious and the most widespread in its effects. Many of the other traditional aspects of French schooling which now appear outdated stem from it, and it is not unrealistic to attribute some characteristics of French society, and notably its lack of social conscience, to it. The assumption is, I believe, invalid, and there are hopeful signs that more French educationists are coming to realise this. The increase in attention to teacher training in the last decade is evidence of an awakening awareness

of the needs of children who no longer come exclusively from well-provided, well-educated family environments.

b Contrast with primary training: The contrast with primary teachers is marked - both in academic achievement and in teaching ability. It is, however, the latter that is increasingly important as secondary schooling becomes comprehensive in scope and outlook. In this development, the teachers of classes in complementary courses and in the final primary classes will have the task of teaching many who would formerly have left school. The question of a common system of training (the "pedagogic and psychological preparation of all our teachers"[20]) - at least for one year - becomes increasingly important as the "orders of learning" at present "juxtaposed" become "fused together."[21]

c Need for revision of the agrégation: "There's nothing in common at all between the preparation of an agrégé and the job of teaching," a young agrégée told me in Marseilles. Her companion described the one-month training session of agrégés as "ridiculously short, giving virtually no assistance at the beginning of one's career." Another agrégé, teaching exclusively first- and second-year secondary classes, said: "It is often a long way from the culture imposed by studies for the agrégation to the formal, methodical teaching of a junior class. It is then very often that we understand how far that training is from practical things." While many of the older agrégés would disagree violently - "you are born a teacher... it is not a trade which can be learnt" - it seems certain that the present system is unsatisfactory. The agrégation should certainly be retained for

the élite of the profession, but it needs to be complemented, as is the C.A.P.E.S. course, by a year of specific training. The agrégé should be - and generally is - expected to teach the upper classes in the second cycle and in the pre-university year, where his learning becomes vital at the same time as his teaching skill becomes less important.

The C.A.P.E.S. system seems to me a very satisfactory preparation provided that the practical training under "pedagogic counsellors" is well carried out. The latter are at present sometimes agrégés with little idea of effective teaching methods themselves! Allied with it might well be some form of supervision during the first year or so of actual teaching. The traditional freedom of the secondary school teacher ("which constitutes his dearest prerogative"[22] according to a recent Ministry publication) would immediately be undermined, but some form of discreet tutelage may well be one of the most effective contributions that could be made for the improvement of teaching standards in the schools. "There are," says Deska, "thousands of colleagues teaching the same subject, but each one is completely ignorant of what the others are doing."[23] Such a situation is in need of reform.

d Development of regional centres: The present growth of the regional pedagogic centres is therefore, I believe, an admirable development. They can, and to a considerable extent already do, fulfil three main functions. They can be a valuable source of information on educational matters. Their present collections of school text-books, and their small but worthwhile

libraries of teaching literature seem so far not to get much use except from C.A.P.E.S. students, but those I saw were well arranged and housed. Secondly, the centres can act as local directors of experimental work, and in a couple of cases - Marseilles and Toulouse - are already doing so through their lycées pilotes. Pilot classes are also operating in a lycée in each regional centre. And also, of course, they are arranging through the C.A.P.E.S. course for increased practical training for teachers, with selected schools and teachers to provide the link between academic study and class-room procedures.

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1 Deska, N., Un Gâchis qui Défie les Réformes, (Paris, Editions du Scorpion: Collection Alternance, 1956), p. 123.

2 Bouchet, H., L'Individualisation de l'Enseignement, (Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1948), p. 13.

3 see section F1k.

4 Glatigny, M., Histoire de l'Enseignement en France, (Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1949), p. 123.

5 Bouchet, H., op. cit., loc. cit.

6 Millot, A., Les Grandes Tendances de la Pédagogie Contemporaine, (Paris, Félix Alcan, 1938), p. 14.

7 ib.

8 Deska, N., op. cit., p. 150.

9 see sections G2a,f.

10 cf. section C3a.

11 Le Recrutement des Professeurs du Second Degré, (Paris,

Institut Pédagogique National, 1959), p. 1.

12 see section G2e.

13 cf. Recrutement et Formation des Maîtres de l'Enseignement du Second Degré, (Paris, Institut Pédagogique National, Mémoires et Documents Scolaires, 1954), pp. 12-37.

14 Details are in: Organisation et Fonctionnement des Centres Pédagogiques Régionaux, containing the circular of 12 June 1952 and the circular concerning a new section for art of 11 September 1954, and in C.A.P.E.S. et Centres Pédagogiques Régionaux, (Paris, Institut Pédagogique National, 1958).

15 Ferry, G., "Formation Psychopédagogique des Professeurs de l'Education Physique", Education Nationale, 12 March 1959, p. 6.

16 In 1955-6, of 5874 agrégés in lycées, collèges and grandes écoles, 3283 were men and 2591 women; the total number of teachers concerned was 10,690 men and 10,068 women. See L'Organisation de l'Enseignement en France, (Paris, Institut Pédagogique National, 1957), p. 12.

17 L'Agrégation, No. 88, March 1959, p. 284.

18 ib., No. 80, February-March 1958, p. 281.

19 Allan, G., "Budget 1960 de l'Education Nationale", Le Figaro, 24 November 1959.

20 La Prolongation de la Scolarité Obligatoire et la Réforme de l'Enseignement Public, (Paris, Institut Pédagogique National, 1959), p. 19.

21 Papillon, J., "Cycle d'Observation et Prédestination", Le Figaro, 9 May 1961.

22 Ministère de l'Education Nationale, La Vie Scolaire en France, (Paris, Institut Pédagogique National, 1956), p. 84.

23 Deska, N., op. cit., p. 123.

H: EXTERNAL EXAMINATIONS

1 BASIS OF THE ASSUMPTIONS

a An examination must end a period of study: As is the case with all countries in Western Europe, an external examination has long been assumed to be necessary to mark the end of secondary studies in France. This is the baccalauréat examination, taken in two parts at the end of the sixth and seventh years of secondary schooling. It is distinctive as being a general examination, awarded on the basis of satisfactory completion of one of the accepted courses of study[1]. It has been responsible for the growth of "examination fever" in France. Roger Bley talks of the "frenzied race to arrive at the top, to surpass all others,"[2] which is so much encouraged by French parents. This is assumed to be a valid race, a right aim for adolescents; and it can be fair for all, it is assumed, only if the examination is nation-wide. The large part played in the baccalauréat examination by the core subjects - especially in the first part, and to a surprising extent also in the second - should be noted. The assumption that all pupils should be able to study these subjects - French and French literature, at least one foreign language, history, geography, mathematics, science - to a high level is part of the concept of education as mainly cultural in aim. The same assumption seems likely to be applied

to the much larger number of pupils shortly to tackle the Brevet d'Etudes du Premier Cycle, which comes at the end of the first four years of secondary schooling. The baccalauréat and the certificate ending the first secondary cycle and the primary cycle are all founded on these same assumptions: that each period of study must end with a formal examination sanctioned by a certificate, and that this should be national in scope.

b External standards: The immediate defence of the nation-wide, external examination is that it is thus freed from the danger of varying standards. The standard is moreover a high one, making the examination fiercely competitive: "Nowadays, what is worshipped is the competition, the essential character of which is that there is a great deal to learn and very few who will be passed."[3] But it is not the competitive aspect that is in the main defended by French teachers. "External examinations," said one headmaster, "are indispensable for without them our teachers would be too easily persuaded that theirs are the only good methods, and it is useful for our pupils to prepare to face other judges than the teachers they know." A mathematics master added that "it is preferable that correction be done by authorities outside the school... for the pupil thus goes through his apprenticeship of neutral assessment." The official argument again rests on the importance of impartial assessment. The preamble to the 1959 Reform of the baccalauréat states: "One of the merits - and not the least important - of this (examination) is that it places all the young people who sit for it on a pefectly equal footing so far as future employment is

concerned, no matter what schools they may have attended in order to do so. Differences in one's scholastic past are effaced by virtue of a title which, as it is the same for all, gathers all our young students together and contributes in this way to their own moral unity."[4] This desire for national unity in educational matters reflects the assumption of centralised authority which was considered at the beginning of this thesis.[5] The baccalauréat in particular has thus become a national institution, accepted and admired uncritically by the general population.

c Local examinations lack prestige: It seems to be widely accepted that any move to localise examinations at this level would automatically lead to a lowering of their prestige value. Jacques Capelovici, writing in the Figaro, said recently, "The number of supporters of the suppression of the bachot is certainly great; they would replace it by a sort of certificate awarded to those judged worthy of it, according to criteria as yet not established..."[6] My impression is that he over-estimates the support for any such change, and, in fact, the moves seem, if anything, to be in the opposite direction. Teachers with whom I talked in both traditional and experimental schools were generally sure that anonymous, standardised marking was essential: "Yes," said one, "I agree that it is better for examinations to be organised and corrected by an outside authority: it ensures more objectivity in the choice of questions and impartiality in the correcting." "Have you thought," argued another, "of the pressures which would be exerted on teachers, especially in small provincial centres, if the exams depended on the local

teachers?" He believed that an external examination was the only way to ensure serious and impartial correction. In fact, the general attitude of teachers, parents, pupils and the administrative authorities, is certainly that no change should be made in the present system, at least so far as its general characteristics are concerned.

d The defined course: Neither the baccalauréat nor the certificate examinations at the end of primary or complementary courses is a subject examination. No specific recognition is given for proficiency in one subject. It is assumed that these examinations are to test overall ability; they are therefore based on a point system, over the details of which there is more or less constant argument. As the courses are prescribed by the central authority and do not vary materially throughout France, either in state or private schools, this is an easily attained goal. The underlying assumption seems to be that ability in only a few subject areas is no guarantee of a worth-while education, that it should be recognised only by unofficial or privately conducted examination, and that all pupils should be forced to present themselves for the same basic list of subjects.

e The oral examination tradition: The assumption has long been that such an important examination as the baccalauréat should be conducted orally as well as in writing, so that candidates in effect have two different types of test to face, and, theoretically at least, two chances to show their ability. The baccalauréat has now, however, in common with the other national examinations, had to abandon oral tests except in foreign

languages. It has not done so without strong attacks from traditionalists. "This interrogation is a necessity," wrote Margaret Rocher, "as it alone can reveal to us whether the candidate really understands... and can express himself..."[7] Bouchet qualified this attitude as a "tenacious prejudice receiving quasi-official consecration,"[8] in 1948, but the reform of the examination, brought about by the constant growth in numbers of candidates, reflected the official reaction in face of an otherwise insoluble problem.[9]

2 SECONDARY EXAMINATIONS

a The "Certificat d'Etudes Primaires": This certificate is awarded at age fourteen after an examination in the following subjects of the primary school course:

dictation (about ten lines) and comprehension
arithmetic
composition (one of two subjects to be chosen)
science
history and geography
art or technical drawing
oral reading (about ten lines)
mental arithmetic
singing or recitation
writing (mark given for the writing in the composition examination)[10]

It is presented by a big minority of French children of that age, those not presenting being those in lycées, collèges or

complementary courses and those who have not then reached the final primary year.

b The "Brevet d'Etudes du Premier Cycle": This diploma is awarded at about age fifteen to pupils who have completed the first four years of secondary schooling in a lycée, collège or complementary course, and after an examination in the following subjects:

French (dictation, comprehension, composition)
mathematics (various options)
foreign language (oral, about ten minutes)
Latin (optional)
science or foreign language (written examination)
history or geography
physical education (optional)

The diploma is to undergo reform to fit it for a wider selection of pupils by 1964. It has already been reformed, as shown above, to bring it into line with the baccalauréat, by the omission of oral tests (which were formerly given in one optional and two compulsory subjects). It is sat for by over 200,000 candidates each year at present.[11]

c Technical examinations: Technical education, as we have seen[12], is provided in a number of different types of state technical schools as well as in a large number of specialised private institutions. The examinations held in these various places are numerous and vary a great deal in importance. The baccalauréat has two technical options, detailed below. Other important nationally-recognised diplomas include:

i the Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnelle and the Brevet Professionnel (these are gained at the end of apprenticeship courses);

ii the Brevet d'Enseignement Professionnel (given in various divisions in the technical collèges); and

iii the Diplôme d'Elève Breveté (gained at the end of courses in the Ecoles Nationales Professionnelles)

d The baccalauréat: The baccalauréat, taken in two parts at the age of about seventeen (boys 17.8, girls 17.6) and eighteen, marks the end of "secondary" schooling. It has traditionally been conducted as a written and an oral examination (the latter only after the written examination has been passed successfully). There are eight sections (or courses) for the first part, and five for the second[13], including the technical sections[14]. The certificate is awarded on a "point" system, each subject being weighted according to its importance in the course and a pass being awarded, subject to certain other conditions, if a minimum number (half the total) of points is gained. Each year about 130,000 candidates sit for the first part and about 90,000 for the second.[15] Of these, about a quarter sit in Paris. The examination is of high standard, but does not present an impossible hurdle for those who have persevered with secondary schooling to this stage. In 1959, for example, the percentage passing varied, in the first part, from 51 (technical B) to 86 (A': Latin, Greek, mathematics), and in the second from 63 (mathematics) to 66 (sciences).[16] The examinations themselves, in their written section, are not unduly detailed, containing normally a general

question on one aspect of the syllabus and some type of specific application work (e.g. commentary on a given text in French, a series of related problems in physics), and generally lasting three hours. The examination questions are now the same throughout France, and are set and marked by examining boards, consisting of both university and school teachers, though no teacher will ever be concerned with correcting the work of pupils of his own region. There has always been a chance to try again for those narrowly failing or who were unavoidably absent at the main sitting. These latter examinations have traditionally been held (until 1960) at the end of the summer vacation. The oral examinations were held within a couple of weeks of the written examinations, and were conducted in the university city within whose jurisdiction the candidate's school lay. Only after being successful in both tests could a candidate add the word bachelier to his name.

e The standard of the baccalauréat: Of each hundred pupils entering the first class in lycées and collèges, less than a third become bacheliers, and this represents only about six percent of the total age group.[17] The examination is thus of about the same standard as its equivalents in England or Germany. It is certainly of higher standard than our own matriculation examination. Whether, in the coming years, further reforms will take place, causing a fall in this standard, cannot be assessed, but it seems improbable. Rather, the versatility and scope of the B.E.P.C. will need to be increased, the baccalauréat retaining its traditional rôle of crowning the secondary studies of the intellectual élite of France.

31 REFORM OF THE BACCALAURÉAT

The baccalauréat underwent fairly drastic reform in 1959, circumstances having forced a re-examination of some of the traditional assumptions concerning the examination.

a The "two-part" baccalauréat: A reform put into operation in 1959-60 involved the institution of two separate series of examinations, one in February, testing the work done in the first half of the school year, and the other in June. This was bitterly opposed by teachers and was doomed to failure almost before it was tried. But the experience was valuable for the proposals eventually to be adopted.

b Suppression of oral examinations: The drastic curtailment of oral testing was one of the major features of the reform. The only subjects tested orally are now the foreign languages. But the "second chance" offered to candidates who fail narrowly or who are prevented from sitting at the main examination is also an oral examination. There were bitter arguments put forward for and against such a move. "Save the Oral!" said a headline in the Figaro: "In the oral, the whole personality is judged. Presentation, appearance, look (whether direct or furtive), presence of mind, power of concentration, character (whether frank or servile), prestige, charm, loyalty, cunning..." And in an adjoining column: "We do not think... that an examiner can discover, in the short time allotted to the interrogation, what the personality of the candidate is. It can be ascertained with certainty only for the brilliant students or for the complete failures, and the written

examination reveals that just as well, if not better."[18] Many teachers with whom I discussed the problem claimed that "written and oral testing must be complementary," but the majority view is simply that, though desirable, oral testing in the baccalauréat is no longer possible, because of the growing number of candidates.

c Suppression of September session: The elimination of the September supplementary examinations - which was one of the aims of the abortive "two-session" reform mentioned above - seems to have been widely applauded, more especially by candidates who no longer have before them the prospect of summer holidays spent revising. Its replacement by an oral examination for candidates gaining between thirty-five and fifty percent of the total marks, to take place at the end of June immediately after the written tests, is obviously a superior solution.

d Physical education: Physical education is a compulsory subject in the baccalauréat (though carrying only one point of a total of between twenty and thirty) except for pupils who present a school medical certificate granting exemption. The practical test involves gymnastics and athletics and gives an interesting side-light on the attitude to physical development in France. That the test will have a positive effect on the importance of the subject in French schools is undoubted.[19]

e Technical examination equivalents: The reform also provides that the technical baccalauréat shall have equivalence with those for philosophy, science or mathematics. This move, providing a qualification for commercial and engineering students

of high standing, already theoretically a fact, cannot fail to improve the status of technical training in France. Philosophy and mathematics (as in the traditional baccalauréat final year) are combined with either technical drawing or economics in these options. This equivalence of status greatly widens the range of the baccalauréat into fields previously outside its scope.

4 CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE ASSUMPTION

a "bachotage": This term signifies the excessive stress on preparation for examinations so prevalent in the final years of the "secondary" course in France. Universally attacked, it nevertheless is a seemingly permanent feature of school life, and may be virtually unavoidable while the baccalauréat remains a centralised, impersonal examination. "Subdued and haunted by examinations, dominated by the disastrous pressures exerted by the grandes écoles, educational humanism has lost its very raison d'être since instead of making men it has been manufacturing candidates."[20] It is the baccalauréat which "weighs like a nightmare over one's final year of studies,"[21] studies which are "crowned by a frantic and general bachotage"[22]. Dr Berge claims, in fact, that "nowadays, alas, it is not rare for bachotage to begin in the primary school;... nay, in the infant school or the kindergarten."[23] While a certificate is so universally sought as is the baccalauréat, it seems to me inevitable that this will be so. "In our age, only one thing matters: the diploma. Just how they succeed in becoming a bachelier is of no importance to us, provided they 'bring home the goods'. It is in this way that

parents talk,"[24] says Deska. The assumption that it is the certificate that matters in later life is undoubtedly not ill-founded: there was no argument with any educationist in France over the importance of somehow gaining the baccalauréat. The actual worth of the pupil, it is seemingly assumed, is thereby guaranteed. Personally, I doubt very much whether this assumption is valid: the solution through decentralisation and more global assessment of pupils' aptitudes is certainly too radical, however, to be adopted in France.

b Falsification of aims: The basic falsification of educational aims through undue stress on examination preparation is not, of course, peculiar to France. But perhaps nowhere else is it so closely identified by parents with their own standing. The personal satisfaction of the parent whose son or daughter has achieved examination success is very real: Berge speaks of the "glory of being precocious", and claims that "the classification of children is felt as though it were a classification of the parents."[25] That the best development of the child may have not been achieved, even may have been neglected, in this preparation, is hardly considered by the majority of parents. The falseness of the aims of many parents, many pupils and not a few teachers is obvious, and one of the underlying causes of the comparative weakness of social conscience in France.

c Imposition of limits on courses: One of the urgent reforms needed if the effects of excessive bachotage are to be avoided is, I believe, a more severe limiting of the actual content of the various syllabi, so that greater stress may be placed both on

the method of handling academic tasks and also on a better all-round development of the pupil. The aim of keeping the courses leading to the baccalauréat wide in scope is, I am sure, a praiseworthy one, but the "indigestible mass"[26] of factual material insisted on, and the emphasis placed on its memorisation in the examination, are unfortunate and unduly limiting. "It (i.e. French education) forms hardly more than overloaded, cluttered intellects which lack strength because they lack unity,"[27] says Hubert. "We must beware," adds Roger Bley, "of a false encyclopaedic learning. He who encompasses too much retains nothing firmly."[28] The centralisation of the examination itself makes the limiting of courses (there are only eight possible courses in preparation for the baccalauréat) inevitable: there should be as great a scope as possible within these courses for individualisation of the work.

d Internal examinations in the lower school: The system of internal testing is highly developed within the French secondary schools, and detailed records, supplemented by staff discussions (now compulsory in the orientation cycle[29]), are kept to assist in assessing pupils for promotion from year to year. The form of the examination and the method of administration is laid down by administrative direction, and is uniform throughout the country.[30] The dossiers kept by the schools can also be called on by the examining juries for the baccalauréat: "No candidate may be failed," say the regulations, "unless the jury has first examined his or her school record book."[31] The way is, I think, open for greater stress on such assessment by teachers within the school and

correspondingly less on the final written tests.

e An internal examination at age sixteen: A first step in such a direction might well be the organisation of the B.E.P.C.[32] at age sixteen on some such lines. This examination, destined already for reform to meet the needs of a system in which the minimum leaving age is fixed at sixteen[33], will cater for increasing numbers of pupils, making external correction and assessment more and more cumbersome and inefficient. The use of a modified form of internal assessment, providing further examinations and the right of a second chance for border-line cases, might provide an eventual prototype for a reformed baccalauréat. If, as a result, greater stress could be placed on true educational needs and less on pure bachotage, a great service would have been performed for French secondary education.

f Freedom of subject choice: The restrictions placed on the choice of course in France for pupils preparing for the baccalauréat - and even more for those preparing for the B.E.P.C. or the present primary leaving certificate - are, I believe, admirable, except that as a greater diversity of pupils enters secondary schools there will be the need for some additions. But the assumption that all pupils should follow a similar broad courseand that this should be the same in all schools is one that allows for effective planning and that avoids the dangers of pupil- or parent-chosen groups of subjects. With the reservations examined earlier with reference to the cultural bias inherent in these courses[34], I would be loath to see any great change in this aspect of educational planning in France.

g Need for greater stress on manipulation of knowledge:

The basic weakness in the examinations as at present conceived is however the lack of emphasis on the use of knowledge gained. The examination papers tend to set questions which require little more than a good memory. Bouchet claimed validly, I believe, that "the good pupil is not the one who distinguishes himself by his originality of style or thought, but the one who conforms the most exactly to the 'average pupil' type...; it is not the one who uses his intelligence and his judgment, his aptitudes, his special talents, but the one with the good memory; not the one who will invent new things, but the one who is the best as 'hashing and rehashing what has already been hashed by others'."[35] Elsewhere, he wrote of "the esteem in which we hold recitation by heart. For anyone who knows children, such a 'test' is among the most suspect, as it brings into play only mechanical reactions which are ineffective for cultural growth."[36] It is this very stress on mechanical reproduction which seems to play a dominating part in many of the baccalauréat examinations. The application of knowledge is employed, of course, in the traditional way in the solution of the standard types of problem whether in science or in literature, in Latin translation or in technical drawing. But the student with the good memory is still at an advantage over his possibly equally talented but less fortunate neighbour. The baccalauréat is assumed to be a guarantee of academic proficiency. It may be so only within a narrow concept of academic worth.

h Advantages of retention of the baccalauréat: The basic assumptions concerning the importance of a nationally recognised

secondary-school diploma are nevertheless in my view valid, and there is no reason to suppose that its abolition would result in improvement of the education offered or received. The unifying effects of the baccalauréat - and of the other terminal diplomas - and the place it has as a national institution will ensure its retention. Moreover, its standards are similar to those of the corresponding examinations in other West European countries, and that is an important argument for its retention at the present time of development towards closer West European integration. Suitably adapted to the present stage of educational growth in France, it can serve as a legitimate aim and as an adequate guarantee for pupils following the complete secondary course in the lycées and collèges of the country.

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1 see section D2a.

2 Berge, A., (ed.), Bon ou Mauvais Elève, (Paris, Editions Sociales Françaises, 1957), p. 142.

3 ib., pp. 139-140.

4 La Prolongation de la Scolarité et la Réforme de l'Enseignement Public, (Paris, Institut Pédagogique National, 1959), p. 35.

5 cf. especially section B1d.

6 Capelovici, J., "Un Baccalauréat Chasse l'Autre...", Le Figaro, 14 June 1960.

7 Rocher, M., "L'Interrogation aux Examens", Cahiers Pédagogiques, 1 November 1957, p. 42.

8 Bouchet, H., L'Individualisation de l'Enseignement, (Paris,

Presses Universitaires de France, 1948), p. 15.

9 see section H3.

10 Ieterrier, L., Programmes, Instructions, Répartitions, (Paris, Hachette, 1956), pp. 497-8.

11 Papillon, J., "Brevet d'Etudes du Premier Cycle - Réforme de cette Année", Le Figaro, 10 October 1959.

12 cf. section D2d.

13 Details are given in section D2a.

14 see section H3e.

15 Papillon, J., "Baccalauréat", Le Figaro, 15 June 1959. The article contains full statistical details of the 1959 baccalauréat examination.

16 ib.

17 Néret, Le BAC. et ses Débouchés, (Paris, Editions Néret, 1958), p. 14.

18 Guth, P., et al., "Sauvez l'Oral", Le Figaro, 23 June 1959.

19 cf. sections A4f and F1e.

20 Hubert, R., Histoire de la Pédagogie, (Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1949), p. 172.

21 Bouchet, H., op. cit., p. 176.

22 Camus, P., "L'Utilitarisme, le Dogmatisme et la Culture", Cahiers Pédagogiques, 15 November 1959, p. 18.

23 Berge, A., op. cit., p. 176.

24 Deska, N., Un Gâchis qui Défie les Réformes, (Paris, Editions du Scorpion: Collection Alternance, 1956), p. 37.

25 Berge, A., op. cit., p. 142.

26 Deska, N., op. cit., p. 115.

27 Hubert, R., op. cit., p. 171.

28 in Berge, A., op. cit., p. 140.

29 see section E3a.

30 See, for example, the details in Horaires et Programmes de l'Enseignement du Second Degré, (21st ed., Paris, Vuibert, 1958), pp. 185-197.

31 Baccalauréat, (Paris, Institut Pédagogique National - Fascicules de Documentation Administrative, 1959), p. 9. This is a reprint of the new law, and the quotation is from article 16.

32 see section H2b.

33 cf. sections A5g and E1d.

34 cf. section D4b.

35 Bouchet, H., op. cit., p. 11.

36 ib., p. 15.

I SEPARATION OF TEACHING AND SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

1 BASIS OF THE ASSUMPTION

a Necessity for both teachers and professional administrators: One basic assumption concerning the work of the teacher in French secondary schools remains to be examined. This is that in the school there are two distinct tasks, teaching and administration, and that these two should not be delegated to the one person. It is perhaps characteristic of the Anglo-Saxon systems of education that the teacher becomes responsible for many matters not directly connected with teaching: it was all the more refreshing for me to note to what extent in France the pedagogue is able to free himself from such duties.

b Their almost complete separation: The secretarial work expected of the secondary teacher is very slight: an attendance check, reports on pupils (weekly and terminal report cards requiring little more than the entering of a mark) and participation in the preparation of pupil dossiers. It is assumed that the preparation of lessons, the conduct of classes and the examining of pupils are the essential daily tasks of the teacher. Work beyond this normally carries additional remuneration. The schools are therefore staffed with an administration section responsible for the efficient operation of the institution and for the discipline and control of pupils. Where teachers participate in

the formulation of internal school policy (and this function is limited because of the centralised nature of the education system), they do so voluntarily through the "Interior Council", but their decisions will normally affect the administrative officers rather than themselves. The assumption is hardly challenged that such an arrangement is the natural one and the most satisfactory for all concerned.

c The right of teachers to teach: The agrégés in particular, and secondary teachers in general, assume that their task is accomplished if they give well-prepared lessons, keep contact with their pupils' progress, and keep abreast of developments within their special subject. They are not, of course, expected to attend school except at the times when they have to teach. "The teacher has the time to devote to his work and to pursue his out-of-school interests, which help maintain a reasonable balance between the demands of his profession and those of his private life."[1] That many teachers find ample time to engage in remunerative work of various kinds outside their school work is axiomatic. Those with whom I spoke in French schools generally maintained that the comparatively large amount of free time available to them was essential to enable them to keep up-to-date in their own field of learning. The agrégés are in fact in many ways as independent as their fellows in the universities. It should be noted, however, that the same freedom does not apply to the primary teacher who generally is much less highly qualified academically and correspondingly more fully occupied in class-room duties of various sorts.

d Administrative staff must be trained specialists: It is assumed that school administration is a worth-while profession, the obvious route to headmastership in some cases, and as such involves detailed training and examinations. The hierarchy of promotable positions, depending on qualifications and experience, is similar therefore to that of the teaching profession. The assumption that is so widespread elsewhere that the running of a school requires no special talents or training is rejected universally in France: the administration of the schools no doubt gains markedly even if the human warmth so often generated in schools run by teachers themselves is to a great extent lacking.

2. ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF HIERARCHY

a Centralised administrators: Supervising the work of the schools, both teaching and administration, are the inspectors whose work I have already discussed.[2] They are normally selected from those occupying the post of headmaster in a lycée or, more rarely, a collège.

b The headmaster: The headmaster of lycée or collège has generally been a professeur before his appointment to this post (and hence not a professional administrator), though he may also less frequently have been promoted from the position of censeur. In the former case he will have had administrative training and probably experience as a deputy before his appointment. His appointment will be "on probation" for his first two years, and is nearly always made without reference to his preference for any region or school. He has little direct control over the teachers

in his institution. Donald Miles sepaks of the "limited rôle the administrative head of a secondary school plays. He is inclined to disclaim all responsibility for the educational prgramme of his school and confine his attention to administrative routine and paper-work."[3]

c Administrative assistants: Under the headmaster (or headmistress), are the censeurs, the surveillants and the intendants. The censeur is generally responsible for the organisation of classes and the time-table, for the general discipline and smooth running of the school, and is the head of the school office staff. He works in liaison with the headmaster as the person responsible for the carrying out of school policy. In bigger schools there will be a surveillant général with several assistants; in smaller schools, one surveillant will suffice. They are in charge of the discipline of pupils outside the classroom, keep control of pupil movement, supervise pupils who are not attending class or whose teacher is absent, and generally carry out the instructions of the censeur. The intendant is the school secretary and is responsible for accounts, for supplies of materials, and generally for the running of the school dining room and perhaps also the attached boarding section. He will have the assistance of one or more stenographers and typists.

d Supervision and discipline: The work of supervision and of discipline (except in the classroom - from which difficult pupils may be expelled) falls then on the shoulders of the administrative staff, particularly the surveillants. Their unpleasant reputation stems uniquely from this circumstance; in

general they are competent and friendly members of the school staff. Problems seem generally to be infrequent, in any case, for the school is regarded by most pupils as merely a place to gain instruction; the details of communal life which play a large part in school organisation elsewhere are here absent, and the amount of supervision needed is correspondingly less. The boarding schools and sections are of course in a different category, and are staffed frequently by junior teachers and monitors as well as by surveillants to ensure that effective supervision is maintained. But in no case does an agrégé or any other qualified teacher regard such matters as part of his work.

e Promotion to and within administration: Competitive examinations based upon precise syllabi are provided for the posts of assistant intendants, économes, and secretaries; these positions do not require university academic qualifications. Within the administrative hierarchy, the surveillants généraux have often formerly been teachers but may be appointed from elsewhere. From there to the positions of censeur and eventually headmaster is by competitive application, and involves a period of probation after appointment.

3 TEACHING STAFF HIERARCHY

a Scale of assistants: The teaching hierarchy is as follows:

Répétiteurs (second category)
Professeurs-adjoints (second category)
Répétiteurs (first category)
Professeurs-adjoints (first category)

Professeurs-adjoints, chargés d'enseignement
Professeurs licenciés
Professeurs certifiés
Professeurs agrégés[4]

These represent the so-called "categories", and each "category" is divided into six classes. When a teacher is promoted, it may be by seniority (seventy percent of cases) or by "choice". In general it will take a licencié or an agrégé at least twenty years to reach the top rung of his category. Before then, he may of course have left the teaching ranks for a position as an administrator.

b Lack of senior teaching positions: Independent of each other, and lacking contact except haphazardly with each other, specialist teachers in lycées and collèges seem rarely to participate in professional discussion of their teaching methods or standards. There is no single teacher responsible for the overall teaching of a subject in a school, and hence no uniformity of approach (or even of text-books, in some cases). Only through the professional journals can the original teacher share his ideas. The talents of the well-paid senior professeur, responsible only for his own classes' progress, are in many ways therefore wasted.

c Headmaster as the controlling link: In theory, it is the headmaster who should provide the link between administration and teaching and between teachers. The "Interior Council" in each school should provide a forum for discussion of educational

problems and of school organisation; its members include not only teachers but also parents' and pupils' representatives. In actual fact, it seems rarely to operate except spasmodically. The headmasters tend all too frequently to content themselves with routine work, and their influence on their pupils is then very slight indeed.

4 CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE ASSUMPTION

a School policy and staff unity: The weakness of the assumption is that it leaves the essential unity of a school in danger. The French lycée or collège can hardly be said to have a policy of its own. There is rarely any attempt at staff unity. The schools lack therefore the individuality apparent in other countries. On the other hand, the administration of the common policy laid down by the central authorities in generally excellent, and the undoubted academic superiority of the teachers provides in many cases a valid alternative to an artificially contrived staff unity.

b The institutional atmosphere: Run by professionally trained organisers, efficient and impersonal, the schools, which tend to be larger than in Anglo-Saxon communities, have uniformly the atmosphere of a government institution. The effect on pupils is one encouraging individuality at the expense of loyalty and co-operation. There is no expectation that pupils will come to love their school as such: it is assumed that such a feeling is improper and that the school would go beyond its proper purpose if it aimed to develop any such esprit de corps.

c The limited scope of the teacher: As the teacher is in contact with his pupils only in the actual teaching period, and the administrative staff provides for their control outside the classroom, there is a limit to the work the teacher can do. While, in the lycées pilotes and sometimes elsewhere, the teachers are now succeeding in devising ways of knowing and helping their pupils better, in general the scope of what can be achieved by the "secondary" teacher is very limited.

d Possibilities for excellence in class teaching: It is obvious, however, that there are inherent in the French system excellent opportunities for first-class teaching. Despite the limitations of centralised courses and methods, the teacher is relatively free in his classroom to organise his work as he thinks best, in the certainty that he will be able to build over a long period of time. Those older teachers whom I observed and who had done this were most inspiring teachers, especially those taking senior classes and dealing with matters of great interest to themselves. That there are not greater opportunities to share and to extend their discoveries seems to me a pity.

e Academic research and practical teaching: One should not however confuse academic research with practical teaching. One of the unfortunate results of the teacher's independence and his lack of contact with his pupils outside the classroom is the tendency, fostered by the type of training received, for many teachers to become research students in their special subject at the expense of their pedagogical efficiency. I am in agreement with recent moves to ensure that "heads of schools put agrégés,

for the whole or the major part of their teaching, in charge of classes in the second cycle."[5] In general the agrégé is the true specialist scholar and his influence - and even his research - can be valuable for senior students. But the use of such teachers with junior classes can be both wasteful and dangerous.

f The school as a social unit: There is, I feel, a great deal in favour of a greater humanising of the secondary schools of France. There is room for development of pupil government and for the growth of the school as a community centre. In this the influence of the headmaster is all-powerful; there seem few signs unfortunately that most headmasters will move in this direction. On the other hand, the imaginative co-operation of teachers - especially those now receiving special training and attending refresher courses - might well lead to a more effective partnership between administrators and teachers. The advantages of the separation of their functions need not preclude their co-operation where necessary for the ultimate good of the pupils.

g Effectiveness of school administration: The advantages of freeing teachers from the routine of school administration are paralleled by the efficiency with which the administrative staff is able to carry out its tasks. The planning of the timetable, the organisation of school meals, the details of discipline, are in the hands of men and women trained to do these tasks and in general, it seems to me, they are well done. The assumption that these are important duties quite distinct from those of the teacher is surely a valid one, and one the results of which are to be admired in the French educational system.

1 Miles, D.W., Recent Reforms in French Secondary Education, (New York, Teachers' College - Columbia University, 1953), p. 146.

2 cf. section B2.

3 Miles, D.W., op. cit., p. 144.

4 Cros/Devèze: Manuel de Législation (à l'Usage des Etablissements du 2e Degré), (Paris, Mizeret, Ringueberck et Rouvière, 1945), pp. 557-576.

5 Papillon, J., "Hiérarchie de Pénurie...", Le Figaro, 23 May 1961.

J THE STATUS OF THE TEACHER

1 BASIS OF THE ASSUMPTIONS

a Teachers as professional people: "Secondary school teaching," says Anthony Kerr in his recent book on schools in Europe, "is in fact regarded as a profession, primary school work as a vocation. Staff are not considered to be engaged at the same job, nor are they paid at the same rate."[1] The assumption that a person who has followed a university course with several years of post-graduate study and who holds the coveted title of agrégé or the C.A.P.E.S. certificate, is a professional is a natural one. Respect for the learning of the agrégé and for the fierceness of the competitive agrégation examination lies deep in the French sub-conscious. The independence of the "secondary" school teacher is almost traditionally accepted as normal both by the teachers themselves and by the general public. "The teaching profession has been endowed... with a spirit of independence," writes Donald Miles, "that has contributed largely to a professional status and prestige of a very high order."[2] While he may be inverting the argument, the two things certainly serve today to reinforce each other. This spirit, he adds, "constitutes a wall of resistance to interference of any kind." Concepts of control and supervision of agrégés and other secondary teachers are certainly affected by this. It is assumed that the teacher

knows what to do and how to do it, and that it would be presumptuous of other teachers or even of headmasters to attempt to verify his efficiency.

b Teachers as permanent public servants: The security of the French secondary school teacher is therefore virtually absolute. As a public servant he is responsible through the government to the people, but even gross inefficiency will normally not be sufficient to ensure his dismissal. The strength of the teachers' unions[3] is moreover there to defend the right of the certificated teacher to continue to hold his post until his retirement almost regardless of his conduct or ability as a teacher. The assumption is that he is fit to teach despite any personal short-comings, provided he has proved himself to be intellectually superior by success in one or other of the post-graduate examinations.

c Teaching as an accessible profession: At the same time, it seems to be assumed by parents that teaching is a desirable and accessible profession to which to aspire. The way into the professional classes for a talented son or daughter of poor parents seems only possible through teaching, and if this was certainly true a half century ago, it still no doubt is accepted by many parents now when the choice is in reality less restricted.

d Teaching low in the scale of professions: In the same way, it seems accepted that teaching is not the most desirable of the professions. Secondary pupils asked to assess the standing of the professeur provided the following figures, quoted in an issue of "Agrégation" in 1959:

Which profession provides the most absorbing activity?	
Doctor	52%
Teacher	4%
Which has the most difficult studies?	
Doctor	53%
Teacher	7%
Which is most favourably considered by the public?	
Doctor	48%
Priest	21%
Teacher	6%
Which profession is the most attractive financially?	
Doctor	38%
Bank manager	15%
Teacher	1%[4]

Obviously the teacher, for all that he is accepted as a member of the professional classes, comes out of such an analysis very poorly.

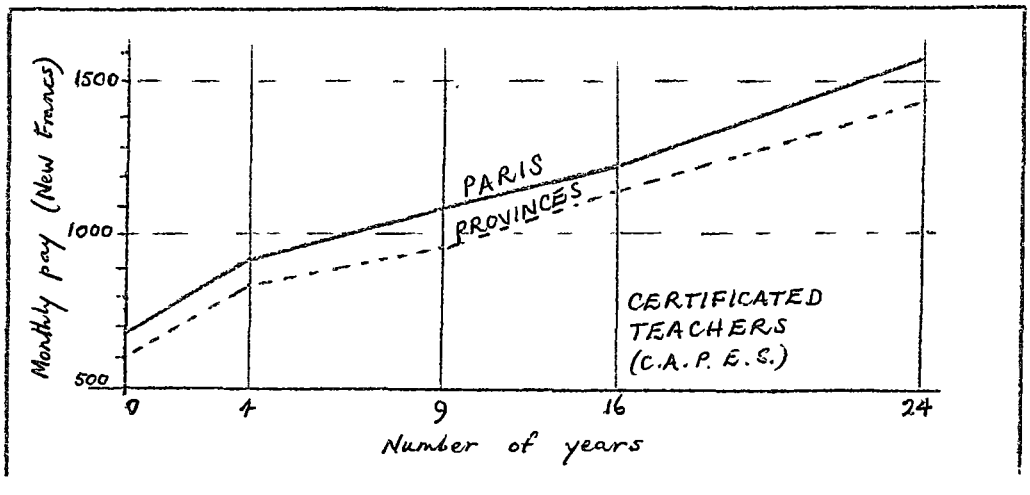
e Parent interference with education: The great gap that clearly exists between parents and teachers, and the wary eye that the former keep on the latter, are perhaps part of this assumption concerning the teacher's professional status allied with his position as a public servant. Certainly parents rarely interfere with the process of education except to lay a formal complaint. Official documents plead for "the closest possible liaison between parents and teachers, more especially in informal conversation rather than in more or less solemn assemblies."[5] It seems rarely to be achieved. There is lack of public support

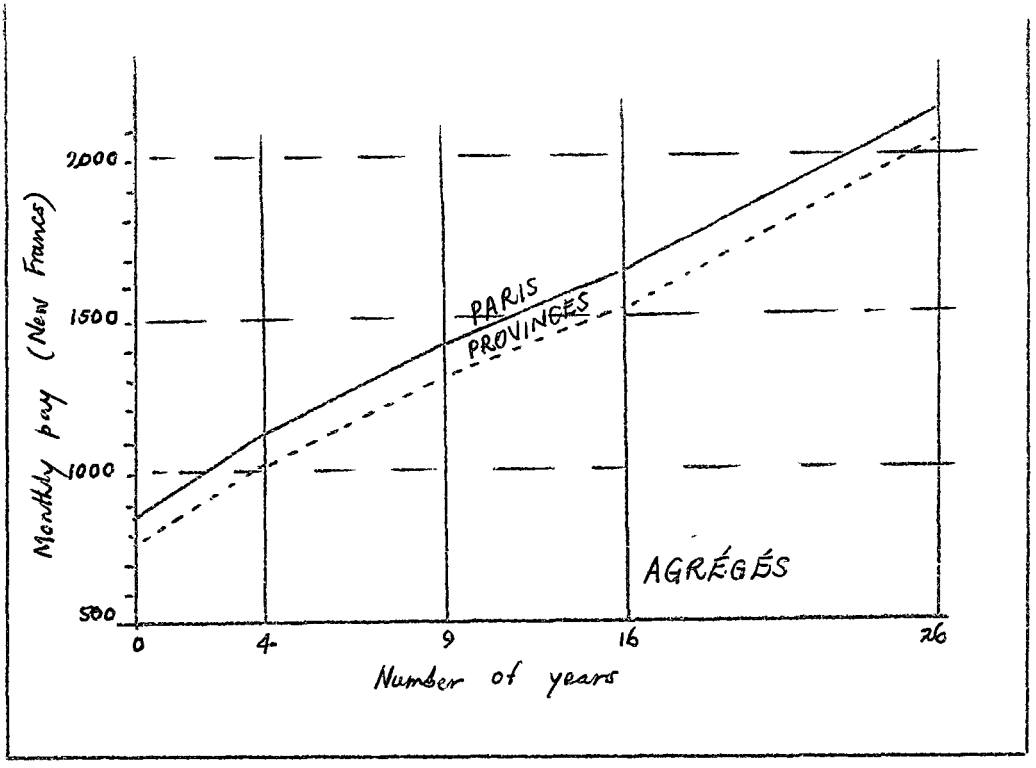
for education except as an abstract concept - no doubt because of its obviously impersonal characteristics as a centrally-controlled institution. Parents' Associations work rather at the national level: they "are organised on a national scale... and have considerable influence on the determination of national educational policy. They are essentially conservative."[6]

f A reactionary profession: The profession itself is essentially conservative and reactionary also. Reforms are made in the face of a vast mass of passive opposition; it seems assumed that teachers exist to uphold the sanctity of tradition. If French "secondary" teachers are among the most highly educated and the most esteemed in the world, they are equally as a group conscious of their position and determined to maintain it as it at present exists at all costs.

2 SALARY SCALES

a Salary scales for class teachers: The following diagrams show the salary range of both certificated teachers and agrégés[7]:





In complementary courses, the primary teachers' salary scale plus a special allowance is paid, beginning at a monthly salary of 450 NF. and ending at 1060 NF. after a period of from nineteen (minimum for specially talented teachers) to twenty-nine years. In all cases, a special allowance of about 100 NF. per month is paid to teachers in schools in the Paris area.

After thirty-three years of service, a pension is paid, amounting to 896 N.F. per month for the certificated teacher and 1117 NF. for the agrégé.[8]

b Salaries for administrators: Scales are lower than the corresponding teachers' salaries until the rank of censeur and of headmaster, when salaries vary above the top agrégé scale according to the size of school. Normally the headmaster or

headmistress occupies a flat attached to the school and free of rent and thus receives an actual salary higher than the apparent figure which is often little above that of many teachers in the school.

3 TEACHING CONDITIONS AND PRIVILEGES

a Hours of work; overtime pay and allowances: In comparison with his colleagues in other countries - and even in neighbouring European countries - the French secondary school teacher enjoys conditions of work which are generally superior. The actual hours of teaching are laid down by regulation: fifteen per week for the agrégé, eighteen for the certificated teacher. Outside these hours, the teacher is not required to be at the school, and frequently in fact works a four-and-a-half day week. Additional hours of work are normally optional and carry additional pay. Moreover, since the Second World War, the number of holidays enjoyed by French teachers (and pupils) has risen considerably: "Holidays in France represent about 200 days per year compared with only 165 teaching days,"[9] writes Denise Laplana. Efforts to increase this by beginning the school year a fortnight earlier were strenuously opposed. The school year does in fact now begin earlier, but the summer vacation also begins earlier...

b Status of various groups in the community: There is little doubt of the prestige of the agrégé in the French community; his traditionally high standard of culture and the sharp contrast between his learning and that of the primary school instituteur have made his post an enviable one for many French people. Though

less well paid than the members of the medical or legal professions, his salary is comparatively high and permits him to live elegantly and, by French standards, quite luxuriously in some cases (especially where he augments his earnings in various ways more or less unconnected with teaching). On the other hand, other secondary teachers seem not to share his prestige in the community, the magical level of university studies not having been reached by them. And certainly there is a traditional attitude of condescension to the surveillant and other administrative staff often not justified by their level of culture and efficiency.

c Recruitment and teacher shortage: Teaching posts are filled by competitive recruitment. The acute teacher shortage, apparent in France as elsewhere, has been characterised by Jean Papillon as "the only great current drama"[10] of French national education. "Public education must recruit... 25,000 bacheliers (holders of the baccalauréat) per year out of a total of 55-65,000, in competition with the demands of industry and the public service, the annual needs of which have been estimated at 50,000 bacheliers... The need for holders of a licence (university degree) is of the order of 7,000 per year; the number available would be insufficient by forty to fifty percent in the unlikely case of all holders entering the field of education, and sixty to sixty-five percent in the case, as in the past, where only three-fifths entered education."[11]

Already in 1958 the shortage of teachers in the various specialist departments was as follows:

	Number	Percentage
Physical sciences	255	12.3
Mathematics	416	11.8
Natural sciences	134	8.0
English	215	6.3
Letters (French)	427	6.0[12]

Emergency measures are therefore being taken, but always with the knowledge that high academic standards are traditional in French secondary education.

d Women teachers in secondary education: There has been a tendency, already noted[13], to offer inferior positions to women, but, if we remember that there are more men holders of the agrégation than women, the position of women teachers in France is not in any sense worse than elsewhere in Europe. Salaries are identical for similar positions and promotion works identically for men or women. In fact, some of the great leaders in modern educational practice in France are women, and their contribution is widely recognised.

e The teacher unions: Teachers are organised into a number of powerful unions, principally, for secondary teachers, the S.N.E.S. (Syndicat National de l'Enseignement Secondaire). Seemingly concerned as much with the general organisation of education as with the details of conditions and salaries, they exert a great influence on education. The strong body of agrégés - which includes also, naturally, most headmasters - is a conservative association with much support from leaders outside education. Through their journals and their regular meetings, they

ensure the development of the profession both from the national and from the theoretical points of view.

4 CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE POSITION

a Maintaining and raising teacher status: There is in general, I believe, great confidence placed in the secondary school teachers by the general public in France. Their status has been won by adherence to the highest standards of academic scholarship, and if they are sometimes poor teachers and more devoted to abstractions than to realities they are nevertheless trusted and admired. Their standing could, I am sure, be increased still further, however, by a more thorough pedagogical training of those who have successfully completed their agrégation before they begin teaching. There is also great scope for teachers who are to such an extent the intellectual élite of the country to provide an education which is broader in scope than at present. There are teacher duties other than the academic-cultural ones, involving the fuller development of the youth of the youngest country in Europe, which have hardly been realised by them so far.

b Dangers to the present status of teachers: At the present time, when the pupil population is increasing so rapidly (the post-war "bulge" coupled with the raising of the school leaving age), there are grave dangers, however. The increasing demand for secondary education places a great strain on teaching resources. A recent pamphlet on teacher recruitment cites the example of "an army general who capitulated before an undisciplined class while a ship's captain revealed a capacity for pedagogy as

remarkable as that he had for the command of a ship."[14] The emergency employment of such people obviously endangers teacher status, however skilled some of them become. There are dangers also in lowering the length of training period in order to fill vacancies more quickly, dangers in lowering the minimum entry level to training courses - the recent provision of a new type of agrégation in modern literature was much criticised on this score - and dangers in the introduction of non-specialist teachers - especially real in the new orientation courses where much greater numbers of pupils are involved than formerly - all to be faced and overcome. I believe that the French prefer to face shortages rather than accept temporary lowering of standards: the tendency to argue on an abstract rather than a practical level may well in this case be of advantage to them.

c High status jealously guarded: The relatively high status of the secondary teacher is then to be jealously guarded and if possible still further raised. The Frenchpedagogue enjoys a place in the social system of France which may well be envied by teachers elsewhere. It may confidently be expected that he will make every endeavour to maintain his lead in this direction.

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1 Kerr, A., Schools of Europe, (London, Bowes and Bowes, 1960), p. 12.

2 Miles, D.W., Recent Reforms in French Secondary Education, (New York, Teachers' College - Columbia University, 1953), p. 20.

3 see section J3e.

4 L'Agrégation, No. 93, October 1959, p. 69.

5 Brunold, C., "Orientation Pédagogique de l'Enseignement du Second Degré", Bulletin Officiel, 30 May 1952.

6 Miles, D.W., op. cit., p. 126.

7 Full details are contained in Enseigner - Pourquoi Pas? (Paris, Institut Pédagogique National, undated).

8 L'Agrégation, No. 90, May 1959, p. 441.

9 Berge, A., (ed.), Bon ou Mauvais Elève, (Paris, Editions Sociales Françaises, 1957), p. 115.

10 Papillon, J., "La Classe de Sixième: Cassure ou Transition", Le Figaro, 24 May 1960.

11 Le Recrutement des Professeurs du Second Degré, (Paris, Institut Pédagogique National, 1959), p. 5.

12 L'Agrégation, No. 81, April 1958, p. 337.

13 see section G2g.

14 Le Recrutement des Professeurs du Second Degré, op. cit., p. 2.

K SUMMARY

1 ASSUMPTIONS REVIEWED

Certain assumptions inevitably underlie any system of education; they vary from country to country, and it has been the purpose of this thesis to see what they are in the case of French secondary education and how they are reflected in the organisation of the system there. As there is comparatively little diversity in French education, this task can be undertaken more confidently in her case than would be so for many other countries. Equally, it is easier to assess the advantages and shortcomings of French secondary education than it is for the diverse systems of a country such as Great Britain or Australia. The following sections briefly summarise what these main assumptions underlying French secondary education are.

a That educational authority should be centralised: This basic assumption is the most vital and most all-embracing. No system of education can work satisfactorily, it is claimed, unless there is uniformity in all areas and control by one centralised authority. Standards are important and can be maintained only in this way; local influences and prejudices would quickly undermine the effectiveness of the system if allowed to intervene. France, as a highly centralised democracy, naturally has an education system which reflects the traditional influence of Paris on the whole of the country.

b That secondary schools should be selective: Children of differing abilities and with differing aims require different types of education, and therefore, it is assumed, some form of selection must operate and different types of school be provided. If, at the present time, a period of orientation is planned for the majority before the final selection, this does not affect the basic claim. Moreover, the effects of social selection are far from erased as yet; the social classes are reflected in the types of schools. The assumption is that opportunities should be provided for all, but only those children whose parents wish, by actual understanding or by tradition, will take advantage of them.

c That secondary education should have a cultural basis: On no other aspect of French education is the literature more extensive than on this. There is perhaps no feature of their education system that pleases most Frenchmen more. And there is a long and wholly admirable respect for scholarship in France which is reflected in the organisation of the secondary schools. It is assumed that the main purpose of a secondary school is to pass on that culture and scholarship which form the common heritage of the nation. If at the same time technical and vocational training have tended to be neglected, it is only recently that many French educationists cared much. The dominant influence even in such fields is still that of disinterested, university-directed study.

d That instruction should be essentially impersonal: Assumptions concerning the teacher's rôle are linked with this concept of culture as the fundamental aim of education. It is accepted that the teacher needs a high level of culture and must

be a specialist in his field, that his task is to pass on his knowledge. It is assumed that the home is responsible for other aspects of the development of the child, and that therefore the teacher will not interfere unduly with matters not connected with scholarship. The lecture is assumed to be an effective way of passing on this culture; the problems of the individual pupil are thought unimportant in comparison with the problems current in the field of learning studied by the specialist teacher.

e That the teacher needs little pedagogical training: This follows immediately from what I have said of the teacher's rôle: many of the teachers themselves, no less than the general public, view pedagogical science with suspicion, and educational experiment proceeds in France only in the face of a considerable amount of passive opposition.

f That examinations should be external to the school: It is natural that a country in which the education system is centralised will also plan an examination system which is controlled from outside the individual school. The success of the baccalauréat in particular has reinforced this assumption, and made the concept of internal certificates almost untenable in France. The defined course of study is a necessary feature of such a system; the consequent further restriction of education is hardly felt, however, as an unsatisfactory feature. It is assumed that the established course confirmed by a nation-wide examination is in the best interests of national education.

g That teaching and school administration should be separate: The nature of the teacher's task in France makes this further

assumption concerning educational organisation natural. It is logically assumed that the teacher's task is simply to teach, and the necessary administrative features of school-life should be delegated to people who have been selected and trained for it. That the assumption also results in better-run schools, from some points of view, is less important than its effects on the freedom of the teacher. For in the French system of secondary education it is the latter who is assumed to hold the key position.

2 A PERIOD OF CHALLENGE[1]

a The basis of challenge: There is no doubt that the post-war period has been one of considerable development in French secondary education, during which some of these assumptions have been effectively undermined by progressive educationists. It is important to realise that the effective challenge of an assumption is no easy or rapidly achieved change. There will always be individuals and groups who will attack existing assumptions by discussing, lecturing, writing. When, however, the number prepared to challenge existing assumptions grows large enough for responsible authority to decide to act, the resulting changes must be fundamental in the system. The present period in France is undoubtedly one in which such reform is taking place. The successive reform proposals of the period from 1947 to 1959 have each (with the exception perhaps of those of Marie) represented a fresh attack on certain of the assumptions, but it has been only in the last two years that any coherent reform has been undertaken.

b The extent of the attack: The assumptions seriously questioned have been principally those concerning selection, culture, teaching methods and teacher training. The increasing diversity of types of secondary school, the ease of transfer from one to another and the increasing numbers of pupils remaining at school beyond the compulsory leaving age - and to a limited extent the "democratisation" of the traditional secondary schools - have led to an undermining of the assumptions concerning selection procedures. The growth of technical education and the introduction of the technical baccalauréat, as well as the increasing diversity of the more practical forms of secondary education, have represented an attack on the cultural bias. The classes nouvelles movement and the introduction of the C.A.P.E.S. training scheme are indicative of an increasing preoccupation with teaching methods and with effective teacher training. On the other hand, there has been little real challenge to the assumptions concerning centralisation, or to those concerning internal school organisation. The external examination system has ~~also~~ escaped any basic challenge and the defined courses and their unifying effects have also been free from attack.

3 SHORTCOMINGS IN THE FRENCH SYSTEM

a Excessive centralisation: Centralisation and emphasis on culture are perhaps the two basic features of French education, and it is in the very extremes of these things that the main shortcomings of the system are to be found. The unwieldiness of the organisation, its consequent lack of vitality and the slowness

with which reform can be achieved because of the need for such reform to come from the top are hampering aspects of a centralised education scheme. The very vastness of the structure has an adverse effect also on the teachers and on the community's approach to school life.

b Inefficient selection procedures: The move towards secondary education for all has just begun to have its effect in France, and the hugeness of the problem is well understood. The close connection between family background and secondary schooling has to be severed before really effective selection can be practised. The provision of suitable secondary schools in rural districts is also far from adequate. Moreover, the limited concept of secondary education which provides only a bilateral system (with or without Latin) for a majority of pupils in their first two post-primary years is open to much criticism.

c Undue cultural bias: Although great efforts are currently being made to remedy the situation, technical and vocational education have been neglected in France; even now lack of facilities prevents a proportion of pupils from obtaining the education they desire. The stress placed on culture, admirable as in many ways it is, has placed a handicap on the development of the nation's resources in the "technological age". The unsuitability of abstract, theoretical courses for more than a relatively small percentage of adolescents must also be considered. As France provides secondary schooling for more and more of her children, the problem becomes a very real one for practising teachers. The domination of the universities and the hierarchy

of subjects make wrong orientation very possible in many cases, and is a grave weakness in the lycées and collèges at present.

d Neglect of moral and physical education: The relative neglect of physical education in the schools seems now to be partially overcome, but the lack of moral training except through the abstract teaching of literature or philosophy still persists. Even in the former field, there is a popular assumption that education of the body is unimportant to be overcome. The French secondary education system lacks balance, however, while only the training of the mind is considered vital in the schools. The old belief that the home could provide for the moral and physical welfare of adolescents was probably never wholly true: as the percentage of adolescents remaining in school grows, it becomes quite false, and the neglect of these things remains a major deficiency in the education system.

e Neglect of social training: Always assumed to be the province of the home, this is even more marked than the neglect of physical or moral education. Many of the characteristics of the French people might be traced to this attitude, though more realistically the school attitude is a result of the environment of laissez faire in which it has developed. Until the secondary schools become conscious of their task in preparing their pupils for the society in which they live - and provide for social activities in the curriculum - the education offered must fall short in its educational aims.

f Impersonal, reactionary teaching techniques: The foregoing characteristics of French secondary education are reflected also

in the techniques of the majority of the teachers - with, of course, a large number of individual exceptions. Aiming to do no more than present a well-organised series of lectures on a fixed course of study, the teacher often lacks more than an incidental contact with his pupils. Concerned much with his subject, little with the individual child, he tends to perpetuate the traditional methods of instruction. Fortunately there are now opportunities in the lycées pilotes and elsewhere for a more active and imaginative approach to be developed.

g Lack of pedagogical training: The lack of effective teacher training for many of the most highly qualified academically of the teachers is a major shortcoming of French secondary education. The influence of the agrégé is very great, yet his real interest in and understanding of pedagogy has seldom been fostered: he is a good teacher in some cases, but by accident rather than design. The traditional disdain of pedagogical science must yield place to a realisation of the importance of teaching competence if the children of average and below average intelligence now entering secondary schools are to be effectively taught.

h The church-state controversy: The long-standing quarrel between supporters of church schools and supporters of a state monopoly in education is far from resolved, and the recent legislation providing increased financial aid to the private schools has done little to help. Of course, the problem is not peculiar to France; the conflict has nevertheless been long and bitter there, seen by some as a danger to national unity, by others as a threat to liberty. There seems no straight-forward solution at present

possible in the French situation.

4 THE WAY TO REFORM

a Decentralisation of authority: Some decentralisation of secondary education could be achieved, I believe, with great benefit and little disadvantage. The académie is already well established to deal with matters such as staffing, school building, methods, programmes and courses. Such local control, while not prejudicing national unity, and remaining within the overall control of a central body, would permit of greater flexibility and opportunity for growth and experiment in a way now impeded by the unwieldiness and vastness of an impersonal authority centralised in Paris.

b Orientation and comprehensive ideals: The move towards the ideal of effective secondary education for all is under way in France: the leaving age has been raised, orientation of pupils put into partial effect and schools partially reorganised in preparation for new types of pupils. There must be a much more effective appraisal of goals and methods and also a more determined effort to educate the public - particularly those who by tradition have by-passed secondary education - however, if these reforms are to be of maximum benefit.

c Vocational and pre-vocational training: Facilities for technical education, for commercial training and for pre-vocational training in general, are insufficient in France; their provision is essential to meet a demand which is growing rapidly. France lags behind even her European neighbours in this respect; cultural ideals need not preclude such training, and in fact should ensure

that technical education is backed with the general development of the individual often lacking in narrow vocational courses.

d Social and moral training: There is need, I believe, for quite fundamental reform in the approach to the education of the adolescent in France so that greater stress is laid on social and moral education. Gradual reform of the school day, and greater opportunities for contact between teachers and pupils and for pupils to work together in groups, may well come through the pioneering efforts of the classes nouvelles. French children seem notably to lack a firm moral training unless the home environment is good. It must be one of the tasks of the school to ensure that this training is given to all children.

e Effective pedagogical training: The C.A.P.E.S. has shown, I believe, a desirable and already partially developed method of preparing teachers for their profession. The final year of this course might well be adapted and included in the agrégation course. The high academic standards of secondary school teachers must not be jeopardised, but their professional training equally must not be neglected if they are to carry out their task efficiently.

f Modern teaching techniques: There is need now for much propaganda in favour of more active teaching methods. The system of "directed studies" and the whole scheme for orientation of pupils are directed towards ensuring a more imaginative approach. There are nevertheless vast numbers of teachers in lycées and collèges whose methods are still those of the university, quite unsuited in many cases to the classes they teach. Experimentation, under proper control, by teachers in all types of schools is to be

encouraged; at present it is too often dismissed as impractical within the centralised and stereotyped regulations in force.

g The spirit of reform: There is nevertheless, I am sure, a growing spirit of reform within secondary education in France. The reforms achieved within the last five or six years (leaving age, orientation, baccalauréat, state aid to schools, etc) are but the beginning of a continuing process. The machine is vast and difficult to get into motion but once started is likely to continue at work. Growing numbers of educationists in France are being influenced by the methods of the lycées pilotes. There is a great awareness of France's need of qualified technicians. "After so many committees, sub-committees, archi-sub-super-resub-committees, which have for the past ten years," as Noel Deska says, "rushed round like rats in a trap,"[2] the time has perhaps arrived when the whole structure is ready for major reorganisation.

h Difficulties facing reform: Although it is true that a centralised system makes possible the introduction of reform on a nation-wide scale, the size and unwieldiness of such an education system prevent such changes from being easily achieved. A second barrier to change is the conservatism of some administrators and many teachers, for whom any basic change in the established order of things is to be viewed with suspicion. There are too, of course, inherent in any change the practical and financial problems, but in the long run it is public opinion which provides the sternest bar to rapid reform in France. State secondary education has since its inception been the preserve of the professional and semi-professional groups who have tended to be conservative and to prefer to maintain

the status quo. Now that the prospect of secondary education for all children is to become a reality, there are big problems to be solved in persuading these groups that the changes are worthwhile. There is an equal problem in France in persuading the rural population that such schooling is both desirable and within their reach. I believe that there is evidence that some of the old assumptions are being undermined. France is at present the youngest country in Europe, and may well see great changes in her education system in the years to come.

5 ADVANTAGES OF THE FRENCH SYSTEM

a Academic standards: There is no doubt that the education dispensed in the lycées and collèges - and, on a different level, in other secondary institutions - maintains the very highest academic standards. The tradition of scholarship of the agrégés and the generally high standard of literacy of the population ensure that no lowering of this level is tolerated. The breadth as much as the depth of the secondary course, its continuity and its stress on abstract thinking, make it an excellent training ground for the academically able pupil. The existence of external examinations, accepted by the whole population and free of local influence, provides a further safeguard. It is certainly important that, as the numbers of pupils entering the secondary schools rise, no change should be made in the level of the baccalauréat examination. It is equally obvious of course that other provisions have to be made for a majority of these adolescent students.

b Position of the teacher: The highly qualified teacher in

the lycée or collège occupies an enviable position in comparison with his confreres in most other countries. Relatively free and not overworked, quite well-paid, his material position is secure. The effective separation of school administration and class teaching is, I believe, one of the most admirable characteristics of the system, and one which has allowed the status of the teacher to rise to that of other qualified professional men. It is very vital that this status be not endangered by lowering standards of entry to the profession, and France seems to be achieving this by the provision of assistants of various sorts whose tasks are not primarily concerned with class-room teaching. On the other hand, it is time, I believe, that greater attention was given to the quality of the teaching of this corps of highly gifted men and women.

c Centralised, methodical programmes of study: One of the advantages of such a highly centralised system as the French one, not to be lightly discarded, is the extent to which programmes of study have been methodically and rationally planned. While there is danger in too rigid an insistence on the following of a centrally prescribed curriculum, there is great value in a nation-wide provision of a basic course in each subject area which has been planned in detail. While local authorities might well have the task of adapting curricula more freely than at present, and while greater freedom in method might well be encouraged, the benefits both for pupils and for teachers (whether writers of text-books or not) in some uniformity is very great indeed.

d Cautious experiment: I have greatly admired the excellent

experimental work carried out in such schools as the lycée at Sèvres, where thorough documentation and careful analysis have ensured the soundness of the new approach. The dangers in indiscriminate experimentation in schools are real ones unless tempered by wise guidance and regular assessment. This approach has been adopted in France with most satisfactory results. Yet the first fruits of these experiments are now ripe for further development. The time has come for those experimental projects which are of proved worth to be put into general application. There is every sign that this will in fact be done and the French will reap the reward of a sensibly planned, albeit perhaps too prolonged, series of controlled experiments. They can in their secondary education look forward to an era of rapid development in which the old assumptions will be challenged anew, and, it is to be hoped, a new set of principles, not radically different from the old, but adapted to meet new challenges, formulated and used to build a better education system.

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1 cf. section A5, for a review of recent reforms in French secondary education.

2 Deska, N., Un Gâchis qui Défie les Réformes, (Paris, Editions du Scorpion: Collection Alternance, 1956), p. 7.

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